

UNDERSTANDING PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL:
AN EMPIRICAL EVALUATION OF KEY FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL EFFECTIVENESS

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“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes
but in having new eyes.”

– Marcel Proust

Abstract of the Dissertation
Understanding Performance Appraisal:
An Empirical Evaluation of Key Factors Contributing to
Performance Appraisal Effectiveness
Barbara Kamer

The aim of this dissertation project was to shed light on the conditions under which performance appraisals are likely to be effective.

Study 1 (Chapter 2) tested a model that considered the direct and indirect effects of five performance appraisal context variables (source's trustworthiness and appraisal result) and process variables (appraisal accuracy, opportunity to voice opinion, and goal quality) on employees' goal commitment after a performance appraisal discussion. A survey of 250 military cadres revealed that all five hypothesized factors played an important role in determining the extent of individuals' goal commitment. The context factors did not affect goal commitment directly but rather indirectly by influencing the process factors.

Study 2 (Chapter 3) examined the role of individual differences within the performance appraisal process. The results revealed core self-evaluations to positively predict recipients' satisfaction and goal commitment following the performance appraisal discussion. Findings of mediation analysis showed that ratees with positive self-concept were more satisfied and motivated because they were more likely to experience 'voice' during their appraisal discussion. However, results of moderation analysis demonstrated that particularly individuals with

low self-evaluations depend more on voice opportunity with regard to their goal commitment than people with high self-evaluations.

The results of the studies have important implications for performance appraisal practice. They demonstrate that characteristics of the feedback message, the feedback source, the feedback recipient, and the feedback process should be considered in order to ensure positive performance appraisal reactions. Since ratees depending on their self-concept may experience and behave differently during an appraisal process, supervisors have to adjust their behavior during the appraisal process to their subordinates' personality.

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1

Introduction

"It appears that some feedback recipients will be more likely to improve than others. We therefore think it is time for researchers and practitioners to ask under what conditions and for whom is . . . feedback likely to be beneficial?"

(Smither, London, & Reilly, 2005, p. 60)

Employees are considered to be the most important resource of performance oriented enterprises (Sommerhoff, 1999). Particularly in times of globalization, high competition, increasing cost pressure and continuous economic change enterprises are obliged to exploit employees' full potential. This makes high demands on executives regarding the guidance, advancement and development of their subordinates.

Considered to be one of the best personal development instruments, performance appraisal has grown in popularity over the past decade (Schuler, 2004). Innumerable handbooks and practice-oriented publications emphasize the performance-enhancing effect of appraisal interventions and describe the optimal designing of a performance appraisal system. Although the use of this instrument has continuously increased, research on performance appraisal has taken a number of twists and turns that query the effectiveness of this instrument. For example, results of some meta-analyses suggest that performance feedback merely leads to small performance improvement over time (Smither et al., 2005a) or at worst results in decreased performance and discouragement of some recipients (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). In addition, several individual empirical studies point out that feedback sometimes even goes along with unintended outcomes like anger, declining commitment to the feedback giver, reduced job satisfaction and decreased leader-member-relationship (Atwater & Brett, 2005; Atwater, Waldman, Atwater, & Cartier, 2000; Brett & Atwater, 2001). However, the negative effects of performance appraisal systems can not merely be attributed to the instrument, but rather to the carrying out of the appraisal process. Since many organizations view their performance management programs just as "organizational wallpaper"

(Wyatt, 2004, p.1) and managers often do not know how to make feedback a constructive experience (London, 2003) it is not surprising that in a Watson Wyatt survey of 1,191 employees across all industries merely 30 percent of the workers agreed with the opinion that the process helps them to improve their performance (Wyatt, 2004). This represents a lost opportunity for most organizations, since performance appraisal programs, when designed, implemented and carried out properly, may provide a great platform for development and motivation. Therefore it is time for researchers and practitioners to ask under what conditions and for whom performance feedback is likely to be beneficial (Smither et al., 2005a). The purpose of this dissertation project is to empirically demonstrate which factors play an important role regarding recipients' performance appraisal reactions and therefore must be considered within the performance appraisal process.

The work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter (introduction) provides a review of performance appraisal. The chapter starts with a general definition of performance appraisal, followed by a brief outline of the intentions and purposes of appraisal systems up to an overview of research literature regarding effectiveness of performance appraisals. The next section outlines the impact of various process and context factors on recipients' reactions following the appraisal discussion. Subsequent to a discussion of previous feedback process models I present my own theoretical model for understanding performance appraisal reactions. The chapter closes with an overview of the aim of this doctoral dissertation and an outline of the two studies. Chapter 2 presents findings of the first empirical study within this dissertation project. The purpose of this first study was to empirically test a reduced version of the proposed performance appraisal

reaction model. Applying structural equation modeling analyses the study examines the direct and indirect effect of five context and process factors (appraisal result favorability, source's trustworthiness, perceived appraisal accuracy, opportunity to voice opinion during the appraisal review and quality of development goals) on recipients' goal commitment subsequent to an appraisal interview. Chapter 3 presents findings of the second empirical study. The purpose of this study was to examining the direct, indirect and moderating impact of recipient's individual differences, particularly core self-evaluations, on reactions subsequent to an appraisal discussion. Both articles (Chapters 2 and 3) are prepared for a separate submission to a scientific journal and follow the publication requirements of American Psychological Association (2002). Chapter 4 provides a summary of the main results of this dissertation project, a global discussion of the findings and practical implications, an overview of the strengths and limitations of the empirical studies and finally a short conclusion.

A Definition of Performance Appraisal

Both practical and scientific literature provide scores of definitions for performance appraisal.¹ In this work, I go along with Coens and Jenkins' (2002, pp. 13-14) view that a systematic performance appraisal practice contains at least five distinguishing features: 1) employees' individual work performance, behaviors, or traits are rated by someone other than the employee, 2) the ratings relate to a specific time period rather than a particular work product or project, 3) the process is systematically applied to all employees or a class of employees,

¹ The term is generally interchangeable with performance evaluation, performance review, annual review, personal rating, or performance rating (Coens & Jenkins, 2002).

4) the process is mandatory, and 5) the results of ratings are kept or preserved by someone in the organization other than the rated employee. Although today appraisal feedback can also be given by persons other than supervisors, the immediate supervisor is still the most common source of performance appraisal and feedback (London, 2003).

The results of performance appraisals are generally communicated within a formal performance appraisal interview. The goal of this discussion is not only to give the employee the results but also to identify weaknesses, strengths and opportunities for development and improvement (Fiege, Muck, & Schuler, 2006). Although performance appraisal in most organizations is formal and structured, the form of the specific process may vary depending on factors such as organization characteristics, the purpose of the rating, the preset rating process, the rating instrument, characteristics of raters and ratees, training of observer as well as performance-related salary system (Landy & Farr, 1980; Latham & Wexley, 1981).

The Intentions and Purposes of Performance Appraisal

Human resource literature provides extensive evidence concerning the uses of performance appraisals in organizations and lists a number of different classification systems. One of the most popular overview originates from Cleveland, Murphy, and Williams (1989). Based on an empirical factor analysis of twenty uses of performance appraisal the authors identified four chief purposes (Table 1):

Table 1

Uses of performance appraisal (Cleveland et al., 1989, p. 132)

Uses of Performance Appraisal***1. Between-Individuals Comparisons***

Salary administration, promotion, retention or termination, recognition of individual performance, layoffs, identifying poor performance

2. Within-Individuals Comparisons

Identifying individual training needs, performance feedback, determining transfers and assignments, identifying individual strengths and weaknesses

3. System Maintenance

Personnel planning, determining organizational training needs, evaluating goal achievement, assisting in goal identification, evaluating personnel systems, reinforcing authority structure, identifying organizational development needs

4. Documentation

Criteria for validation research, documenting personnel decisions, meeting legal requirements

First, performance appraisal can be used for comparing individuals in terms of their overall performance levels and therefore enhances the quality of

organizational decisions ranging from salary administration to promotions to layoffs.

Second, performance appraisal can help identify individuals' strengths and weaknesses and provide critical input for determining specific training needs, transfers and assignments.

Third, performance appraisal supplies important information concerning personnel planning, organizational training and development needs as well as implementation and evaluations of human resources systems in organizations.

Finally, performance appraisals provide a legally defensible basis for personnel decisions.

Based on their findings, Cleveland et al. (1989) conclude that within an organization, performance appraisal is typically used for a variety of purposes rather than for one purpose only, but in general has the greatest impact on salary administration, performance feedback, and identification of employee strengths and weaknesses.

In a subsequent work Murphy and Cleveland (1995) particularly emphasized the positive psychological effect of a successful performance appraisal system such as maintaining and enhancing employees' work motivation, satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

However, to ensure these favorable benefits the appraisal results must be discussed within a properly managed performance appraisal interview. This discussion typically pursues three main objectives (Fiege et al., 2006):

The first goal is to discuss how well the appraisees have met the main job tasks, objectives, and performance standards and to announce the evaluation

results. The two-way communication may help employees to identify their strengths and weaknesses and probe the causes of dissatisfying performance results. Ideally, supervisors address other misunderstandings, vocational problems and conflicts and use this opportunity to thank and praise their superiors. An effective performance appraisal might help to reduce prejudices, clarify roles and relationships, create trust, and may have a long term positive impact on the superior-subordinate-relationship (Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Roberts & Pavlak, 1996).

The second aim is to set goals and objectives for the period ahead. Specific and challenging goals help to clarify the supervisor's expectations (Lee & Son, 1998) and therefore may have positive motivational effects.

The third goal is to discuss the employee's future professional career and establish an individual development plan.

Effectiveness of Performance Appraisal Systems

Performance feedback is supposed to enhance performance and a variety of attitudes and behaviors of interest to organizations (Jawahar, 2006a). Considering the high financial and human costs for the development, implementation, and conduction of performance appraisal, it is of paramount importance that researchers and practitioners verify these positive effects.

Change in Performance

One of the most interesting reactions to performance appraisal is probably behavioral change. However, a review of the existing literature revealed that even

though performance improvement is one of the principal reasons why performance appraisals are carried out there is no clear evidence that such interventions effectively result in behavior change. The effects of feedback have been studied especially in the field of upward and multisource feedback. Thereby, feedback has been found to result in greater performance by some researchers (Atwater, Roush, & Fischthal, 1995; Atwater, Waldman, & Brett, 2002; Heslin & Latham, 2004; Reilly, Smither, & Vasilopoulos, 1996; Smither, London, Vasilopoulos, Reilly, Millsap, & Salvemini, 1995) but not by others (Johnson & Ferstl, 1999).

Similarly, findings of an exhaustive meta-analysis by Kluger and DeNisi (1996) raised the issue that performance improvement is not the only outcome that can be expected from performance feedback. Their analysis of 131 feedback studies revealed only a small overall improvement in performance. Moreover, performance actually declined in more than one third of the studies. Even though Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) results provide important insights, they must be interpreted with caution since the authors considered studies with very different performance measures (from task performance in a laboratory setting to students' grades). A further meta-analysis by Smither et al. (2005a) even revealed the magnitude of improvement over time after direct report, peer, and supervisor ratings to be very small. The authors identified several possible problems regarding the examination of performance improvement as effectiveness criteria:

First, sometimes more than two administrations of an appraisal program might be required to observe a significant improvement. For example, Walker and Smither (1999) found in their five-year study of upward feedback that managers

significantly improved between the second and third, respectively the third and the fourth year, but not between the first and second year.

Second, looking at the average rating across items at two time points may be too crude to measure behavior change. Since recipients usually are encouraged to select a small number of improvement goals they might subsequently make some behavior changes related to these specific goals, but not to the overall performance ratings. Consistent with this assumption, Nemeroff and Cosentino (1979) found employees to improve only on items for which they set goals.

A third problem with performance improvement measurement is the fact that raters are often oblivious of small improvement or attend to and recall information about the ratee which is consistent with their last appraisal.

Fourth, most authors just focus on the difference in performance without consideration of the initial performance level. Thereby, especially good performers have low opportunity for improvement but high possibility that their performance sustains or declines (“ceiling effects”; see also Atwater et al., 2002). Hence, researchers should always take into account ratees’ initial performance rating to interpret the effectiveness of performance feedback.

Since performance is not just contingent on individual motivation but also on individual skills, the work situation, available technology and resources as well as support by the supervisor and peers (Nerdinger, 2001), it is quite difficult to determine the unique impact of performance appraisal on performance change. A further problem of measuring performance change may also be the “high manager mortality.” If most of the dropouts are unmotivated managers or very competent

managers with little improvement potential, the apparent feedback effect may be inflated (Seifert, Yukl, & McDonalds, 2003).

To sum up, previous results showed that performance appraisal feedback may not necessarily result in positive behavior change but instead have unintended negative effects. Nevertheless, researchers and practitioners must be aware of the fact that performance change is suitable only to a limited extent for measuring performance appraisal effectiveness.

Change in Self-Perception

A further interesting measurement criterion to evaluate the impact of performance appraisal feedback is people's change in self-perception subsequent to performance feedback. The empirical finding that employees with biased self-perception misdiagnose their strengths and weaknesses and make less effective job-relevant decisions (see Atwater & Yammarino, 1997, for an overview) led people's self-awareness to become an important issue in organizations. Several studies examining the effect of performance feedback on self-evaluation even confirmed that performance feedback significantly improves self-other rating agreement (e.g., Atwater, Ostroff, Yammarino, & Fleenor, 1998; Atwater et al., 1995; Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Van Velsor, Taylor, & Leslie, 1993). However, the question is open whether the higher congruence can be traced back to true self-perception change, change in behavior, or socially-desirable responding.

Further Reactions to Performance Appraisal

Research has also studied various other reactions to performance appraisal processes. For instance, a study of Swiss employees' attitudes and opinions found a significantly positive effect of regular performance appraisal interventions on job satisfaction, commitment, pay satisfaction, and intention to remain within the organization (Grote & Staffelbach, 2008). However, various authors (Marcus & Schuler, 2006; Taylor, Fisher, & Ilgen, 1984) caution that performance appraisal can evoke negative effects such as open reactance, defensive remarks about the feedback source, refusal of authority, or acts of sabotage. Findings of a study by Pearce and Porter (1986) revealed that employees performing at a satisfactory but not outstanding level significantly decreased their organizational commitment after the introduction of formal appraisals. Furthermore, research by Atwater and Brett (Atwater & Brett, 2005; Brett & Atwater, 2001) indicated that ratees receiving unfavorable performance feedback show negative emotions, discouragement, anger, demotivation, and a reduction of commitment to the feedback source.

To sum up, a generalization about the effects of performance appraisal feedback on individuals' responses seems hardly possible. Whether the positive benefits are realized particularly depends on characteristics of the feedback message, source, recipient, and process. Therefore, the next chapter focuses on conditions under which employees are most likely to benefit from performance appraisal interventions.

Influence Factors on Performance Appraisal Reactions

A large body of empirical studies have examined and confirmed factors that can augment or diminish the effectiveness of performance appraisal. In addition to these single studies, various feedback process models (Alberternst, 2003; Dickinson, 1993; Elicker, Levy, & Hall, 2006; Fulk, Brief, & Barr, 1985; Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979; Klein, Snell, & Wexley, 1987; Levy & Williams, 2004; Roberts, 1994; Roberts & Reed, 1996; Smither et al., 2005a; Tharenou, 1995) have tried to demonstrate the interaction of some factors and their influence on feedback responses. The purpose of the following paragraphs is to organize empirical research and theoretical insights of the most popular context and process factors that have been shown to play a role regarding ratees' performance appraisal feedback reactions.

The Effect of Context Variables

Ilgen et al. (1979) proposed the first comprehensive model of various influence factors on recipients' feedback responses. Their seminal model (see Figure 1) provided the basis for most of the subsequent feedback process models. According to the authors, both the intermediate psychological processes initiated by the feedback (perception and acceptance of feedback, desire to respond, and intended response) and the subsequent feedback response are affected by three context variables: the nature of the feedback message, characteristics of the feedback source, and recipients' personal characteristics.

The next three sections will provide a review of research examining the role of these three context factors with regard to individuals' feedback reactions.

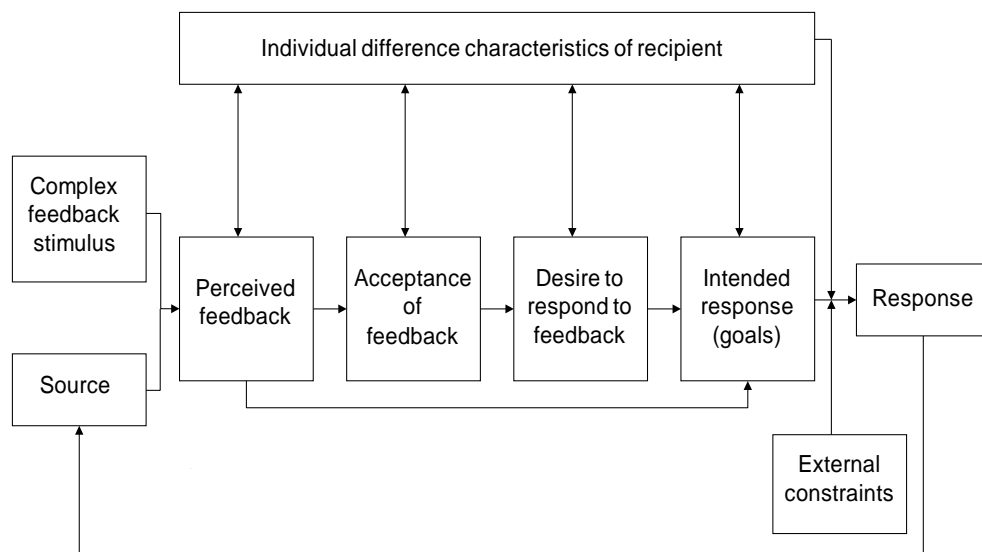


Figure 1. Model of the effects of feedback on recipients (Ilgen et al., 1979, p. 352).

Characteristics of the feedback message. Research identified several dimensions of the feedback stimulus that may affect perception of the feedback (e.g., timing, frequency), but the most important is the sign (Ilgen et al., 1979). It is a prevalent notion that positive feedback results in more favorable reactions than negative feedback. This position is congruent with the belief that people are motivated to maintain a positive self-concept and therefore seek, prefer, and value positive feedback from others (cf. self-enhancement theory; Shrauger, 1975; Swann, Griffin, Predmore, & Gaines, 1987). Positive feedback is thought to enhance the individual's feeling of competence and intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975), whereas negative feedback is believed to evoke a defense mechanism (Ilgen et al., 1979). Consistent with this argumentation, a bulk of studies confirmed that positive feedback, in contrast to negative feedback, is perceived as more accurate (e.g., Brett & Atwater, 2001; Elicker et al., 2006; Kinicki, Prussia, Wu, & McKee-Ryan, 2004) and results in higher satisfaction with and perceived utility of the appraisal review (Elicker et al., 2006; Nathan, Mohrman, & Milliman, 1991),

satisfaction with the feedback source (Albright & Levy, 1995), and perceived distributive and procedural justice (Elicker et al., 2006). Further, some studies (e.g., Brett & Atwater, 2001; Swann et al., 1987) found that individuals may also experience discouragement, frustration, depression, anxiety, and hostility when feedback is negative or not as positive as expected.

Whereas the effect of feedback favorability on recipients' affective reactions seems to be clear, the relation between feedback favorability and subsequent motivation to improve remains still ambiguous. For example, some studies (e.g., Brutus, London, & Martineau, 1999; Smither, London, & Richmond, 2005b; Smither et al., 1995; Walker & Smither, 1999) found some evidence that individuals with unfavorable feedback are more likely to set development goals and subsequently to improve than well performing employees. In contrast to these results, other studies (Atwater & Brett, 2005; Elicker et al., 2006; Kinicki et al., 2004) found no or even a positive relationship between feedback favorability and employees' motivation to improve (Fedor, Eder, & Buckley, 1989).

This variability in feedback sign effects on motivation may be attributed to different causes. Even though low performers may be more obliged to enhance their performance and should therefore report higher motivation to improve their behavior intention, their actual motivation might depend considerably on some other factors, such as their self-concept (Shrauger, 1975; Swann et al., 1987). In addition, a study by Kinicki et al. (2004) provided some evidence that the appraisal result possibly affects recipients' reactions indirectly rather than directly: Applying covariance structure analysis of employees' response to performance feedback, the authors found feedback environment (feedback sign, frequency, and specificity) to

affect desire to respond not directly but indirectly, by influencing recipients' perceived accuracy of the feedback. Further, Cusella (1982) argued that feedback favorability may even affect the appraisal discussion, in that positive feedback (in contrast to negative feedback) presumably enhances a supportive communication climate between the feedback source and the recipient, which in turn leads to a greater sense of self-worth and intrinsic motivation. Consistent with this argumentation, Elicker et al. (2006) found performance appraisal favorability to be positively related with recipients' perceived instrumental voice during an appraisal interview.

To sum up, whereas the feedback message has been found to be positively related to peoples' affective reactions, its correlation with recipients' motivational responses remains still unclear. Some studies even suggest that message favorability probably does not affect motivation directly but instead indirectly, by influencing recipients' attitudes and experiences during the appraisal process.

Characteristics of the feedback source. As a second major characteristic of the performance appraisal context that may have a substantial influence on feedback responses, Ilgen et al. (1979) suggested the power and expertise of the feedback source. Several laboratory and field studies examined the influence of a variety of source characteristics on feedback responses. For example, within an experimental study Bannister (1986) investigated the influence of the source's expertise on the recipient's feedback responses and found that participants receiving feedback from a credible source (high expertise) evaluated the feedback as more accurate, judged the source as more perceptive, expressed greater satisfaction with the feedback,

found the suggestions to improve performance as more helpful, and indicated greater intent to use the suggestions than people receiving feedback from a noncredible source (low expertise). Consistent with this finding, Albright and Levy (1995) observed in their laboratory study that feedback from experts was evaluated as more accurate, satisfying, and useful than peer feedback.

In a more recent work, for example, Alberternst (2003) suggested that not merely the expertise but rather the trustworthiness of the source – i.e., the source's ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer & Davis, 1999) – may be decisive for employees' response to performance feedback. Surveying a small sample, Alberternst (2003) found a positive relation between supervisors' trustworthiness and employees' satisfaction with a performance appraisal discussion. Further research by Fulk et al. (1985) and Reinke (2003) demonstrated that employees having trust in their supervisors (as a result of supervisors' trustworthiness) are not only more satisfied with the appraisal review but also report higher acceptance, perceived accuracy, and fairness of the appraisal system. In addition, trust in the supervisor may also have an indirect effect on employees' performance appraisal responses, since it may heighten employees' willingness to communicate openly with the supervisor on job-related problems without fear of negative repercussions (Fulk et al., 1985). Findings of several studies confirmed that individuals with trust in their supervisor show a higher desire for interaction (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974) and also report higher influence and more opportunity to express their feelings during the appraisal discussion (Alberternst, 2003; Fulk et al., 1985). A study by Nathan et al. (1991) demonstrated that the relationship between subordinate and supervisor not only predicts the degree to which employees judge their appraisal to

be accurate (i.e., based on results achieved, job-related behaviors, skills and abilities, and predetermined goals) and report high opportunity to participate but also determines the extent to which supervisor and subordinate discuss important career issues within the appraisal review.

In summary, the results mentioned above showed that trustworthiness of the source plays an important role regarding recipients' attitudes and behaviors during and following the feedback discussion.

Characteristics of the feedback recipient. Since individuals are more than passive recipients of feedback (Ashford & Cummings, 1983), their individual characteristics are also believed to play an important role in their attitudes and behaviors during and following the performance appraisal process. The research examining the role of individual differences regarding feedback responses focused mainly on evaluation-focused personality traits.

For example, Smith and Sarason (1975) found individuals high in social anxiety to perceive the same interpersonal feedback as more negative than people with low social anxiety. Consistent with these findings, Atwater and Brett (2005) examined factors that influence leaders' reactions to 360° feedback and found that leaders with low emotional stability reported more negative emotions following multi-source feedback, even though they did not receive lower ratings than others. Investigating the effect of people's emotional stability on their motivation to use multisource feedback, Smither et al. (2005b) found that leaders low in emotional stability were less likely to be rated by a psychologist as motivated to use the feedback.

A further personality trait that has been found to affect feedback reactions is people's self-esteem. In a study on the impact of people's global self-esteem on their reactions to success, Jussim, Coleman, and Nassau (1987) found individuals low in self-esteem to interpret feedback about their results in a laboratory test less favorably than individuals high in self-esteem, regardless of the type of feedback received. Similarly, results of a laboratory study by Dutton and Brown (1997) revealed a positive relation between individuals' self-esteem and favorable emotional reactions to test performance outcomes. Further, Shrauger and Rosenberg (1970) found that individuals with high self-esteem raised their self-competence evaluations more after success and lowered them less after failure than people with low self-esteem. This result provides some evidence that individuals with high self-esteem respond less to negative feedback than people with low self-esteem do (Ilgen et al., 1979).

The research also provides some evidence that individuals' control beliefs might be essential with regard to their feedback responses. For example, a study by Atwater and Brett (2005) demonstrated that people's self-efficacy positively predicted their engagement in follow-up activities subsequent to developmental 360° feedback. Additionally, Maurer and Palmer (1999) observed in a study on managers that their perceived control over their own improvement was positively associated with their intention to improve following peer and subordinate feedback.

To sum up, the research provides some evidence that peoples' fundamental evaluations of themselves might play an important role in their perception and reaction to performance appraisal feedback. Despite some strong conceptual

similarities between the traits mentioned above, the traits have usually been related separately to a variety of outcomes – with no discussion of their interrelationships or possible common core (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoreson, 2003). However, research by Judge and colleagues (Erez & Judge, 2001; Judge, Bono, & Locke, 2000; Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998) revealed that the four traits self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control, and emotional stability load on a single factor. This suggested that it may be appropriate to study the traits together and consider them as indicators of a higher-order latent concept called *core self-evaluations*.

Excursus: The concept of core self-evaluations. The results mentioned above are all in line with Judge, Locke, and Durham's (1997) suggestions that people's appraisals of some circumstances are affected not only by attributes of the situations or objects but also by fundamental assumptions that people hold about themselves. When examining the dispositional source of job satisfaction, Judge et al. (1997) introduced a new broad personality trait termed core self-evaluations to the industrial and organizational psychology research literature. Core self-evaluations is a higher-order construct comprised of four specific evaluation-focused personality traits: self-esteem, i.e., favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self (Rosenberg, 1965); generalized self-efficacy, i.e., the evaluation of one's capabilities to mobilize motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise general control over many events (Judge et al., 1997); emotional stability, i.e., the tendency to be emotionally stable and steadfast and less insecure, guilty, and timid (Costa & McCrae, 1988); and locus of control, i.e.,

the degree to which people believe they can control events and outcomes in their lives (Rotter, 1966). Recent studies found significant evidence of the validity of the concept (e.g., Erez & Judge, 2001; Judge et al., 1998) and found the construct to be related to a number of attitudes and behaviors, such as life satisfaction (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005; Judge et al., 1998), job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2005; Judge et al., 2000; Judge et al., 1998; Piccolo, Judge, Takahashi, Watanabe, & Locke, 2005), happiness (Piccolo et al., 2005), higher goal commitment (Bono & Colbert, 2005; Erez & Judge, 2001), goal attainment (Judge et al., 2005), performance (Erez & Judge, 2001; Judge, 2009; Judge et al., 2003), and work and career success (Judge & Hurst, 2007, 2008). Erez and Judge (2001) further found the construct core self-evaluations to be a more consistent predictor of job behaviors than the individual traits. This implies that the variance underlying the core self-evaluations factor adds something unique to the prediction beyond that provided by any single trait.

In a seminal article, Judge et al. (1997) argued that core self-evaluations may affect other evaluations or behaviors not merely directly through a process of emotional generalization but also indirectly by impacting specific actions leading to these global evaluations and behaviors. Consistent with this assumption, Judge and colleagues found e.g., employees with high core self-evaluations to set more self-concordant goals (Judge et al., 2005) and to obtain more complex jobs (Judge et al., 2000), which in turn fostered job and life satisfaction. As a third mechanism by which core self-evaluations may affect people's attitudes and behaviors, Judge et al. (1997) proposed a moderator effect and argued that depending on their self

concept, people may experience and interpret some circumstances differently (Judge et al., 1997).

To date, the research examining the role of the construct core self-evaluations within the performance appraisal context is scarce. Given that the core self-evaluations construct has been shown to predict people's attitudes and behaviors better than the individual traits (e.g., Erez & Judge, 2001), it seems vital to examine the role of core self-evaluations regarding people's reactions to performance appraisal feedback.

The Effect of Process Variables

Although Ilgen et al.'s (1979) model provided the basis for most of the subsequent feedback models, it considered only recipients' perception of the feedback as a process variable and did not consider the way in which the feedback is delivered or whether specific and challenging development goals were set. This is somehow surprising, since other appraisal theorists emphasized the handling of the appraisal feedback discussion as one of the best predictors of recipients' constructive action taking (e.g., Meyer & Walker, 1961) and even deem it the "Achilles' heel of the entire process" (Kikoski, 1990, p. 301). In addition to Ilgen et al. (1979), several subsequent feedback theorists recognized the importance of recipients' participation during both the performance appraisal process (Alberternst, 2003; Elicker et al., 2006; Erdogan, 2002; Fulk et al., 1985; Klein et al., 1987; Nathan et al., 1991; Roberts, 1994; Roberts & Reed, 1996) and goal setting (Alberternst, 2003; Dickinson, 1993; Roberts, 1994; Roberts & Reed, 1996; Tharenou, 1995) regarding recipients' attitudinal and motivational reactions to

performance appraisal feedback and considered these process factors within their feedback models. The following sections provide an overview of the impact of important process variables on feedback reactions.

Perceived appraisal accuracy. Ilgen et al. (1979) proposed in their seminal feedback process model that the “recipient’s belief that the feedback is an accurate portrayal of his or her performance” (p. 358) may be the primary determinant of his or her desire to respond to the feedback. According to the authors, it does not matter if this belief is itself correct. But without the ratee’s conviction that the evaluation refers to his or her actual behavior and results, it can not be expected that he or she will be motivated to change behavior. Although perceived accuracy is often cited as one of the most popular performance appraisal reaction criteria, it has seldom been operationalized as one separate construct. Instead, it has been measured in conjunction with other reactions, notably fairness (Cawley, Keeping, & Levy, 1998). However, in one of the few studies measuring feedback accuracy explicitly, Kinicki et al. (2004) tried to validate Ilgen et al.’s (1979) feedback process model and found that the extent to which people believed that their performance feedback was based on a fair evaluation of performance significantly affected their desire to respond, which in turn influenced their intended response, and this again determined subsequent performance (measured eleven months later). Based on these results the authors concluded that “the motivational effects of feedback begin with a perception of feedback accuracy” (p. 1064). In a further study Nathan et al. (1991) measured perceived accuracy by asking feedback recipients to indicate the degree to which their current supervisor evaluation was

based on behavioral criteria such as job-related behaviors, skills and abilities, results, and predetermined goals. Their results revealed that accuracy was a positive predictor for recipients' perceived quality and utility of and satisfaction with the review as well as satisfaction with the work, the supervisor, and the company after the review. In addition to the positive relation between appraisal accuracy and satisfaction, Elicker et al. (2006) found a positive correlation between perceived appraisal accuracy and perceived procedural and distributive fairness and motivation to improve.

In summary, it appears that recipients' perceived accuracy of the performance appraisal result is an important precondition for positive affective and motivational reactions to it.

Opportunity to voice opinion during the feedback discussion. A second, frequently mentioned characteristic of an effective performance appraisal process is employees' opportunity to participate in the appraisal review (Nathan et al., 1991). Whereas early performance appraisal research (Burke, Weitzel, & Weir, 1978; Fulk et al., 1985; Greller, 1975, 1978) already recognized the importance of participation during the appraisal process, the procedural justice theory (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) notably provided a useful theoretical framework to explain the value of participation. Procedural justice theorists suggested that an individual's reaction to a decision does not only depend on the favorability of this decision but also on the perceived fairness of the procedure leading to it. Although researchers posited numerous factors leading to perceived procedural justice (cf. Greenberg, 1986; Leventhal, 1980; Leventhal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980), process control, or *voice*,

as it was renamed later (Folger, 1977; Lind & Tyler, 1988) remained one of the most extensively studied and confirmed prerequisites for justice perception (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995). Voice refers to “the practice of allowing individuals who are affected by a given decision to present information relevant to the decision” (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995, p. 657). Two alternative interpretations sought to explain the importance of peoples’ opportunity to voice their opinion during a decision process. The instrumental explanation (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) suggests that people value voice because it increases their potential amount of control over the process (process control) and the decision (decision control). In contrast, the non-instrumental explanation (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992) proposes that people value voice because it gives them a feeling of belonging to a valued group and enhances their self-worth. Various studies and meta-analyses revealed that voice, both with and without influence on the decision, contributes to greater satisfaction with the appraisal, the session, and the system (Cawley et al., 1998; Elicker et al., 2006; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995), perceived utility (Cawley et al., 1998), distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Cawley et al., 1998; Elicker et al., 2006; Jawahar, 2006b; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995), and motivation to improve (Cawley et al., 1998; Elicker et al., 2006). Further studies demonstrated that voice, especially in the goal setting process, heightens individuals’ acceptance of assigned goals (Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990) and goal commitment (Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, & Alge, 1999).

All in all, the research demonstrated that giving ratees the opportunity to state their views and opinions during an appraisal review increases the likelihood that

they will feel fairly treated, show positive affective reactions, and exhibit motivation to improve.

Assignment of specific and challenging goals. Besides the factors mentioned above, a third characteristic of the appraisal process is widely believed to influence recipients' responses following an appraisal review: the assignment of specific and challenging goals. One of the prime objectives of performance appraisal feedback is to inform individuals about their strengths and weaknesses, so that they know what they are doing well and what they have to improve. However, without subsequent specific goal setting, individuals often struggle to improve their performance, for they do not know what exactly is expected of them or on what weakness they should focus. Knowing that improvement is necessary but not knowing how this can be achieved is likely to engender feelings of discouragement, anxiety, or even anger. Based on a review of hundreds of goal setting studies and an extensive meta-analysis, Locke and Latham (1990) concluded that specific, challenging goals result in higher performance than no goals or "do your best" goals. Specific goals reduce the ambiguity about what is to be attained (Locke, Chah, Harrison, & Lustgarten, 1989), provide a better idea of the performance evaluation criteria (Lee & Son, 1998), and help identify the main task (Goodson & McGree, 1991). Specific and challenging goals direct employees' attention and effort away from goal-irrelevant and toward goal-relevant activities, heighten persistence, and lead to the use of task-relevant knowledge and strategies. Further, the setting of challenging goals can also heighten subordinates' self-

efficacy, since it reflects supervisors' trust in their abilities (Locke & Latham, 2002).

A bulk of studies confirmed the crucial role of goal setting with regard to performance appraisal reactions. For example, Nemeroff and Cosentino (1979) compared different ways in which managers handled the performance appraisal interview with their superiors and found the feedback plus goal setting condition to result in higher perceived interview success than the feedback only condition. Similarly, Burke et al. (1978) reported that goal-setting was positively related to subordinates' understanding of supervisors' expectations, perceived fairness of and satisfaction with the appraisal review process, the assessed value of the performance review, and subordinates' motivation to improve performance. Employing a multiple regression analysis, Pooyan and Eberhardt (1989) found goal-setting together with supervisor-subordinate relationship and appraisal accuracy (evaluation based on employee's skills and job-related behavior) to account for more than 50% of the variance in satisfaction with performance appraisal. The extent to which the supervisor set clear goals and ensured that the subordinates understood how to accomplish their goals was the most significant predictor, accounting for more than one-third of the variance in the criterion variable. Similarly, Lee and Son (1998) found that after controlling for performance level, participation opportunity, and career discussion, clear goal setting provided unique variance contribution to employees' reactions to their performance appraisal review.

Again, however, there are inconsistent findings regarding the impact of goal setting on motivation. Even though some researchers (Burke et al., 1978; Nemeroff

& Cosentino, 1979) found goal setting to be significantly related to employee motivation to improve, other researchers (Dipboye & De Pontbriand, 1981; Ivancevich, 1982) were not able to confirm such a relation. One cause for these inconsistent findings might be the different measurement of goal setting. Although goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002) suggested that goals must be specific, clear, and challenging to be effective, most of the studies mentioned above did not explicitly measure specificity and challenge of the assigned goals. Focusing explicitly on goal quality, Alberternst (2003) found specific and challenging goals to provide a unique contribution to subordinates' satisfaction with the appraisal discussion and goal commitment. Based on their observation that goal specificity raised goal commitment in anagram-solving tasks, Wright and Kacmar (1994) concluded that achieving specific goals is more difficult and therefore more prestigious than attaining vague goals. Moreover, results of a study by Mento, Klein, and Locke (1992) revealed that difficult goals are believed to be consistent with more practical benefits, pride, and self-respect than easy goals. In a subsequent study, Klein et al. (1999) showed that goal specificity and goal difficulty were significant predictors for goal commitment, at least in the case of self-set goals.

To sum up, the findings of various studies demonstrated that goal setting has an important impact on people's performance appraisal reactions. Furthermore, research demonstrated that it is not only important to set goals within an appraisal discussion but also to ensure that these goals are specific and challenging. To know what is expected of one and to see a value in goal attainment are crucial preconditions for individuals to be motivated to attain the assigned goals.

Theoretical Models for Understanding Performance Appraisal Reactions

Although the results mentioned above provide important indications as to what variables must be considered within the performance appraisal process in order to understand ratees' reactions, single studies cannot explain the interaction of these individual factors and their incremental contribution in explaining performance appraisal responses. A better depiction of reality is therefore promised by feedback process models, or performance appraisal reaction models. Even though various existing models (e.g., Alberternst, 2003; Dickinson, 1993; Elicker et al., 2006; Fulk et al., 1985; Ilgen et al., 1979; Klein et al., 1987; Levy & Williams, 2004; Roberts, 1994; Roberts & Reed, 1996; Smither et al., 2005a; Tharenou, 1995) try to explain responses to feedback and thereby possess a high level of plausibility, none of them considers all of the context and process factors mentioned above at the same time.

For this reason, I developed a preliminary theoretical performance appraisal reaction model that organizes all of the context and process variables mentioned above around one single conceptual model (see Figure 2). Consistent with Ilgen et al.'s (1979) model, the present model proposes that context factors such as appraisal favorability and the trustworthiness of the source mainly affect recipients' responses indirectly by influencing their perception of the performance appraisal feedback. However, going beyond the model developed by Ilgen and colleagues, the present model suggests that context factors also influence further motivational aspects of a performance appraisal process, such as the recipient's experienced participation (voice) during the appraisal discussion or agreement on high quality development goals, which in turn affect the recipient's immediate

reactions to the review and long-term behaviors and attitudes (e.g., performance; satisfaction with the work, the supervisor, and the organization; intention to quit).

Differences in individual characteristics are believed to affect not only recipients' attitudes and behaviors during and subsequent to the appraisal feedback but also the performance appraisal context. Research found, for example, that people with high core self-evaluations are more likely to obtain positive performance ratings (Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge et al., 2003) and to be satisfied with the leader (Heilmann, 2008) than people with a negative self-concept. Moreover, a study by Janssen and Van Yperen (2004) revealed that employees with stronger mastery orientations are more effective on the job, for instance, because they tend to establish higher-quality exchanges with their supervisors. Therefore, it is highly probable that people's individual characteristics affect various features of the appraisal process: the feedback message, their attitude toward and interaction with the feedback source, their experiences during the appraisal discussion, and their subsequent feedback responses.

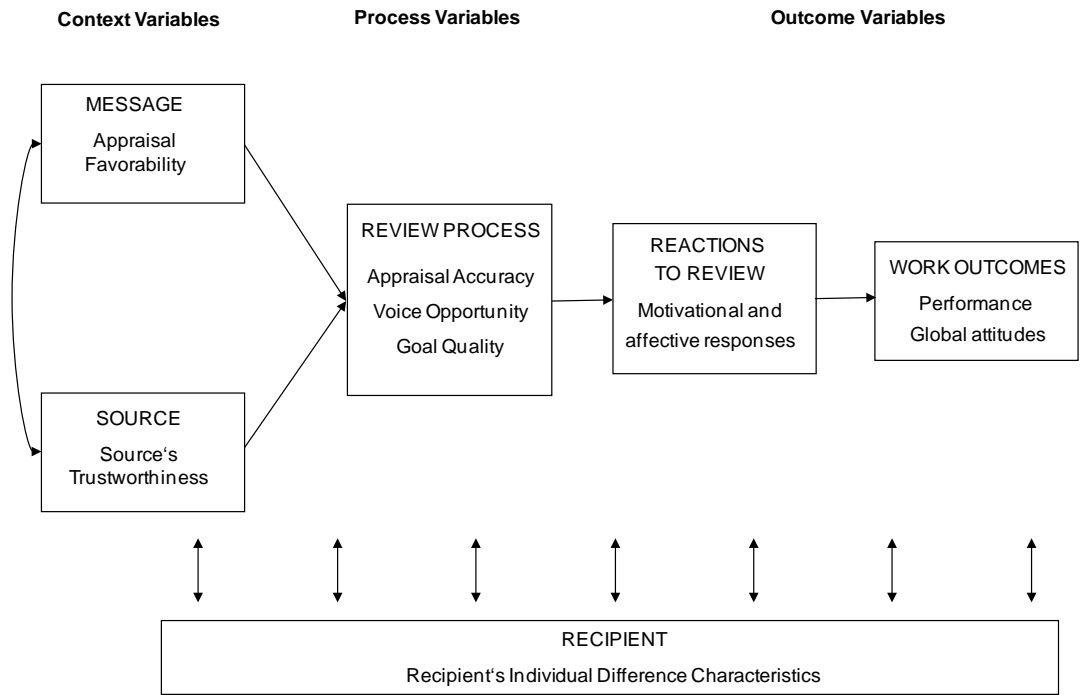


Figure 2: Theoretical model for understanding performance appraisal reactions.

The Aim of This Doctoral Dissertation and Outline of the Studies

Unfortunately, many theoretical feedback models have never been tested empirically (Erdogan, 2002; Klein et al., 1987; Levy & Williams, 2004; Smither et al., 2005a), and the few models that have been shown to fit to a set of data focused only on some selected process variables, such as feedback accuracy (e.g., Kinicki et al., 2004) or voice (e.g., Elicker et al., 2006), but they ignored other important process variables.

Thus, the purpose of the first study was to test empirically a reduced version of the performance appraisal reaction model described above. A large number of military cadres of the Swiss Armed Forces were surveyed before and after their regular performance appraisal review. Since the militia military cadres returned to their civil jobs after the nine-week military training, it was not possible to collect

long-term outcomes. Further, I decided explicitly not to include recipients' personality characteristics within the structural equation model in order to reduce the complexity of the model and to provide a process model containing only context and process factors that could be substantially influenced by the supervisor (see Figure 3).

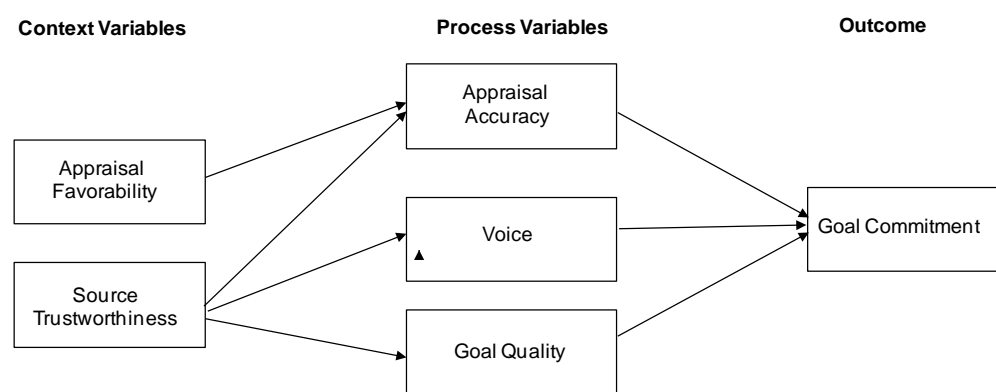


Figure 3. Hypothesized model of goal commitment following a performance appraisal session.

Regarding the feedback reaction, I decided to measure people's goal commitment, i.e., the intended effort to accomplish the goals and unwillingness to abandon or to lower the goals (Campion & Lord, 1982). Surprisingly, although encouraging recipients to improve on specific development goals is one of the main purposes of an appraisal discussion (Smither et al., 2005a), employees' goal commitment has been ignored in the performance appraisal literature (for a review of appraisal reactions, see Cawley et al., 1998; Keeping & Levy, 2000).

To sum up, the first study examined the influence of perceived appraisal favorability, source’s trustworthiness, perceived appraisal accuracy, voice opportunity, and goal quality on goal commitment in order to better understand under which conditions employees are motivated to attain their goals for the next appraisal period.

The purpose of the second study was to examine how recipients’ individual differences, particularly core self-evaluations, affect their behavior during and reactions subsequent to the performance appraisal discussion. Based on Judge et al.’s (1997) theory that core self-evaluations influence people’s attitudes in a direct, indirect, and moderated way, the second study examined to what extent people’s core self-evaluations directly affect their satisfaction and goal commitment following the performance appraisal discussion, to what extent these relationships are mediated by the perceived opportunity to voice opinion during the appraisal discussion, and to what extent individual differences also moderate the relationship of perceived voice and feedback reactions (see Figure 4).

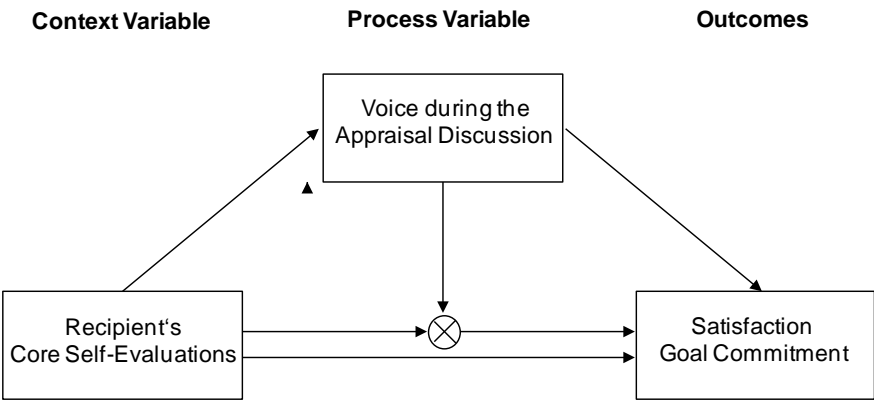


Figure 4. Three mechanisms by which core self-evaluations may affect recipient’s satisfaction and goal commitment subsequent to an appraisal discussion.

Even though the model presented in Table 2 proposed various additional possibilities as to how individual differences may impact the performance appraisal process, these relationships were not tested within the scope of the two studies presented in the following. However, further studies in future should examine the impact of individual differences on various context and process variables.

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The Role of Context and Process Variables in the Performance Appraisal Process

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Abstract

This study sheds light on the conditions under which performance feedback positively influences employees' goal commitment after a performance appraisal discussion. The authors developed a theoretical model of the impact of context and process variables on goal commitment and surveyed 250 military cadres before and after their appraisal discussion. The results of structural equation modeling analyses support the hypotheses that perceived appraisal accuracy, ratees' opportunity to voice opinion during the performance appraisal review, and goal quality are the most important predictors of goal commitment. Further, the findings indicate that performance appraisal results and source trustworthiness create a context that substantially influences the perception of the appraisal and the performance appraisal discussion. Implications for performance appraisal practice and future research are discussed.

Keywords: Performance appraisal, appraisal accuracy, voice, goal quality, source trustworthiness, goal commitment

The Role of Context and Process Variables in the Performance Appraisal Process

Performance appraisal systems are among the most important human resource systems in organizations (Jawahar, 2007; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). They not only provide important information concerning pay, promotion, and layoff decisions but also facilitate the identification of training and development needs of employees (Elicker, Levy, & Hall, 2006). This is why officers in the Swiss Armed Forces invest up to 5% of their working time for the performance appraisal with the purpose of increasing the motivation and performance of their subordinates (Annen, 2000). However, in the last few years the efficiency of performance appraisal systems has been increasingly called into question. For example, a recent American survey of 48,012 employees, managers, and CEOs indicated that only 13% of employees and managers and only 6% of CEOs believe that their current performance appraisal system is useful (People IQ, 2005).

Results of scientific studies (e.g., Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Smither, London, & Reilly, 2005) have also shown that the desired motivation and performance increase often fails to set in after feedback interventions. Feedback recipients sometimes react with anger and demoralization after a feedback intervention (Brett & Atwater, 2001), and in some cases performance appraisal even leads to a long term erosion of commitment, satisfaction, performance, or subordinate-superior relationship (Atwater & Brett, 2005; Atwater, Waldman, Atwater, & Cartier, 2000; Jawahar, 2006). Thus, a blanket generalization that feedback per se has a positive effect is much too simplistic (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979). Much more important

is the question as to under what circumstances positive outcomes are likely to arise after a performance appraisal discussion.

An overview of existing feedback and performance appraisal process models points to five broad context and process factors that play a role in determining employees' feedback reactions: performance appraisal result (Alberternst, 2003; Dickinson, 1993; Erdogan, 2002; Ilgen et al., 1979; Smither et al., 2005), trustworthiness of the feedback source (Alberternst, 2003; Elicker et al., 2006; Erdogan, 2002; Fulk, Brief, & Barr, 1985; Ilgen et al., 1979; Klein & Wright, 1994; Levy & Williams, 2004; Nathan, Mohrman, & Milliman, 1991), perceived feedback accuracy (Dickinson, 1993; Ilgen et al., 1979; Nathan et al., 1991), opportunity to voice opinion during the performance appraisal discussion (Alberternst, 2003; Elicker et al., 2006; Erdogan, 2002; Fulk et al., 1985; Klein, Snell, & Wexley, 1987; Nathan et al., 1991; Roberts, 1994; Roberts & Reed, 1996), and goal setting quality (Alberternst, 2003; Dickinson, 1993; Roberts, 1994; Roberts & Reed, 1996; Tharenou, 1995). To date, however, there exists no performance appraisal process model that accounts for all five variables at the same time.

Furthermore, researchers have assessed many different affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions to performance appraisal (Cawley, Keeping, & Levy, 1998). However, for performance increase, which is the criterion of most interest, the empirical literature (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Smither et al., 2005) has yielded no definite results. Smither et al. (2005) explained this by saying that recipients are usually encouraged to improve on specific development goals and that this behavior change probably has no effect on the average performance rating. For this

reason, the authors suggested measuring performance improvement with respect to the specific goals set by the feedback recipient after the last appraisal session. This means for feedback reaction research that goal commitment, i.e., the intended effort to accomplish the goals and the unwillingness to abandon or to lower the goals (Campion & Lord, 1982), should be examined as a primary feedback response. Despite the apparent importance of goal commitment, this variable has been ignored by most researchers (for a review of appraisal reactions, see Cawley et al., 1998; Keeping & Levy, 2000).

This study presents a model based on theoretical foundations and empirical results displaying the direct and indirect effects of the most important context and process variables on goal commitment. In contrast to many theoretical feedback models, which were never examined empirically (Erdogan, 2002; Klein et al., 1987; Levy & Williams, 2004; Smither et al., 2005), the proposed theoretical model is tested by structural equation modeling analyses.

Model Overview and Hypothesized Relationships

Figure 1 shows that goal commitment is primarily proposed to be a function of three important process factors: perceived appraisal accuracy, opportunity to voice opinion during the appraisal review, and quality of the goals. Of paramount importance to the model is the proposition that performance appraisal favorability and source trustworthiness do not have a direct but an indirect effect on goal commitment in creating a context that substantially influences the perception of the appraisal and the performance appraisal discussion. This model extends previous work stressing the importance of specific context and process factors of the performance appraisal process. It is the first comprehensive empirical examination

of the links between appraisal favorability, trustworthiness of the feedback source, perceived appraisal accuracy, voice in the review, goal setting quality, and goal commitment. The following sections review major variables in the model and examine past research related to the specific relationships portrayed in Figure 1.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Effects of Perceived Appraisal Accuracy, Voice, and Goal Quality on Goal Commitment

As early as the 1970s Ilgen et al. (1979) argued that particularly the perceived accuracy of feedback plays a crucial role in employees' response to the feedback. Since the release of this seminal article, many performance appraisal models (Dickinson, 1993; Kinicki, Prussia, Wu, & McKee-Ryan, 2004; Nathan et al., 1991; Roberts & Reed, 1996) have stressed the importance of feedback accuracy for appraisal outcomes. Kinicki et al. (2004) argue that the reason for the importance of the perceived accuracy lies in the fact that people, according to self-consistency theory (Korman, 1970), are motivated to perform on a job in a manner that is consistent with the self-image with which they approach the job situation. They are therefore more likely to engender a positive desire to respond when they perceive the feedback to be an accurate assessment of their performance. Different empirical studies consistent with this hypothesis indicate that people who rate their appraisal as accurate are not only more satisfied and perceive the appraisal, the discussion, and the appraisal system as being fairer (e.g., Elicker et al., 2006; Keeping & Levy, 2000; Nathan et al., 1991) but also have greater motivation to improve after the discussion (e.g., Elicker et al., 2006; Kinicki et al., 2004; Roberson & Stewart, 2006). Using a structural equation technique, Kinicki et al.

(2004) were able to show that the perceived feedback accuracy also has an influence on the desire to respond, the intended response, and performance eleven months later. So far, no study has examined the effect of perceived appraisal accuracy on goal commitment directly, but, considering the above discussion of the effect on motivational factors, we put forward the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Perceptions of feedback accuracy will relate positively to goal commitment.

Research on procedural fairness (Leventhal, 1980; Leventhal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975) makes it clear that not only the appraisal result but also the perceived fairness of the performance appraisal process plays an important role in the feedback reaction. One of the most extensively studied aspects of a procedurally fair process is the feedback recipient's opportunity to voice his or her opinion during the appraisal review. There are two alternative interpretations as to why voice is valued, referred to as the instrumental explanation and the non-instrumental, or value-expressive, explanation (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995; Lind & Tyler, 1988). The instrumental explanation (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) argues that people are self-interested and try to exercise some control over the process (process control) and the outcomes (decision control) in order to ensure that their own interests are met. Therefore, voice is valued, because it increases the perceived control and opportunity to indirectly influence the decision. In contrast, the non-instrumental explanation (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992) argues that people are in fact social rather than self-serving beings and value voice for its own sake, because it validates their feelings of belonging to a valued group and enhances self-worth. The research failed to demonstrate the dominance of one

explanation conclusively and found that both instrumental and non-instrumental voice contribute to greater satisfaction and perceived fairness (Cawley et al., 1998; Elicker et al., 2006; Jawahar, 2006; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995; Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990) and motivate the employee to improve (Cawley et al., 1998; Elicker et al., 2006). The results of an experimental study by Lind et al. (1990) showed that participation in goal setting is also an important condition for the acceptance of assigned goals. These findings are consistent with the results of a meta-analysis by Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, and Alge (1999), which showed that voice in goal setting is a significant predictor of goal commitment. On the basis of these findings we hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 2: Perceptions of voice during the appraisal discussion will relate positively to goal commitment.

The quality of goals is another factor that is proposed to influence goal commitment. Specific and challenging goals create attention and commitment towards goal-relevant activities, mobilize resources, boost endurance, and develop the search for and application of relevant knowledge and strategies (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002). Clear and specific goal setting contributes to the employee knowing the expectations of the superior (Lee & Son, 1998), being better able to plan, observe, and evaluate the specific steps (Locke & Latham, 2006), and obtaining a clear idea of the outcomes connected to goal achievement (Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987; Klein et al., 1999). Based on the observation that goal specificity raises goal commitment in anagram-solving tasks under assigned goal conditions, Wright and Kacmar (1994) claimed that achieving specific goals is more prestigious than attaining vague goals, because it is more difficult. Mento, Klein,

and Locke (1992) described the positive effect of goal difficulty in a similar way. In a series of eight studies the authors showed that people believed difficult goals to be consistent with more practical benefits, pride, and self-respect and that striving for hard goals would be more likely to give them a sense of achievement and competence. Finally, as goal specificity and goal difficulty turned out to be important predictors for goal commitment, at least in the case of self-set goals (Klein et al., 1999), we assume the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The goal quality (specificity and difficulty) will relate positively to goal commitment.

Contextual Effects on Perceived Appraisal Accuracy, Voice Opportunity, and Goal Quality

A widespread opinion among many scientists and practitioners is that the feedback result can be considered to have the most important effect on the feedback reaction. In contrast, Ilgen et al. (1979) argued that feedback response depends less on feedback favorability than on the perceived feedback accuracy. However, consistent with self-enhancement theory (Shrauger, 1975; Swann, Griffin, Predmore, & Gaines, 1987), positive feedback is generally perceived to be more accurate than negative feedback (e.g., Brett & Atwater, 2001; Elicker et al., 2006; Kinicki et al., 2004). Thus, feedback favorability may affect motivation indirectly via perceived accuracy. Indications that this may be true can be found in a study by Kinicki et al. (2004), which showed that the feedback environment (favorability, specificity, and frequency of feedback) influences the desire to respond not directly but indirectly via perceived feedback accuracy. Therefore, the feedback result represents an important context factor that helps to better explain

the employees' attitude concerning the performance appraisal. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: The appraisal favorability will relate positively to perceived appraisal accuracy.

Because the formal performance appraisal interview is only one incident in an ongoing relationship between a subordinate and a supervisor, the attitudes and behaviors during and after the appraisal process should be also interpreted in the light of the social context (Elicker et al., 2006; Nathan et al., 1991). For instance, Levy and Williams (2004, p. 892) argued that only "if an employee believes a supervisor has the skills to properly appraise, has the interest of the employee at the heart, and believes the supervisor upholds standards and values, the employee is likely to trust that supervisor". Without trust in the feedback source there is a high probability that people brand negative appraisal to be inaccurate and ignore it. Both Kinicki et al. (2004) and Roberson and Stewart (2006) found a significant correlation between source credibility and perceived feedback accuracy.

Further, it seems probable that properties of the feedback source, especially the trustworthiness of the source, influence the performance appraisal discussion. It can be expected that benevolent, experienced superiors of integrity, who are interested in the views and needs of their subordinates, create an open climate in which employees can address deficits and problems in performance. In return, employees who trust their superior and who believe that their own opinions are valued are more likely to communicate openly and participate actively in the talk. This was confirmed in a study by Roberts and O'Reilly (1974) that showed that employees who place trust in their subordinates are more satisfied with

communication and have a higher desire for interaction than employees who have no trust in their subordinates do. In addition, Korsgaard and Roberson (1995) found a significantly positive correlation between trust and the perceived instrumental and non-instrumental voice.

Finally, the trustworthiness of the feedback source may also have an influence on the agreement on goals during the feedback discussion. Since benevolent superiors are interested in their employees' development, they will aim to formulate clear and specific goals, so that the employees can direct their energy specifically towards achieving these goals. Trustworthy superiors know the abilities and skills of the employees and provide goals in such a way that they present a challenge to the employees but do not overburden them. In turn, employees who trust in the help of their superiors when difficulties arise are willing to set clear and challenging goals and be evaluated on the level of attainment (Alberternst, 2003). Consistent with this argument, Tharenou (1995) and Klein and Snell (1994) found positive correlations between goal quality and both subordinate exchange relationship and perceived supervisor support.

Considering the above discussion, we predicted that trustworthiness is an important context variable that significantly influences the perception of the appraisal and the performance appraisal discussion:

Hypothesis 5: Perception of the supervisor's trustworthiness will relate positively to perceived appraisal accuracy.

Hypothesis 6: Perceptions of the trustworthiness of the supervisor will relate positively to voice opportunities in the appraisal interview.

Hypothesis 7: Perceptions of the trustworthiness of the supervisor will relate positively to quality of goal setting.

Mediation Effects of the Process Variable

Although the meta-analyses by Klein et al. (1999) and Wofford and Goodwin (1992) predict a positive correlation between performance and goal commitment and although attitudes toward the superior turned out to be a positive correlate with motivation (Kinicki et al., 2004; Roberson & Stewart, 2006), the present model predicts that the effect of context variables on goal commitment is mediated by the process variables. Clues for this assumption were provided by Kinicki's et al. (2004) structural model, where the influence of feedback stimulus on intent to respond is fully mediated by perceived accuracy. Regarding the source credibility, Roberson and Stewart (2006) also showed that source credibility did not explain any further variance in the motivation to improve, if the influence of appraisal accuracy and perceived fairness were also taken into account. Thus, we predict:

Hypothesis 8: The effect of the context variables on goal commitment is fully mediated by the process variables.

Method

Sample and Procedure

Data were collected through paper-and-pencil surveys sent to 406 militia military cadres of the armored forces and infantry training unit. In total, 250 people returned both a copy of their last appraisal results and the questionnaire. Sixty-four percent of the participants held the function of squad leader, 24% the function of platoon leader, and 12% were in a higher function. All of the respondents were men, and the average age was 21. More than half of the participants (54.8%) had

completed an apprenticeship, 37.6% had a high school certificate, and 4.4 % had a college or university diploma.

The study was conducted during the unit training of the Swiss Army's basic military training. During this eight week instruction phase, military cadres are evaluated by their direct superiors after the fourth week based on a standardized qualification form. The results of this performance and behavior appraisal are communicated to the subordinates during an appraisal discussion. Our first questionnaire was given to the cadre a week before the qualification and contained questions on demographic data and attitudes toward the superiors. This information was obtained before the feedback in order to better assess whether the given social context affects the performance appraisal discussion and reactions. Immediately after the review another questionnaire was issued to the participants, containing questions on the appraisal, the performance appraisal discussion, and goal commitment. The participants returned the questionnaires in a sealed envelope at a collecting point.

Measures

Appraisal favorability. In the standardized performance appraisal of the Swiss Army (Annen, 2000) military leaders evaluate their subordinates with regard to nine specific performance dimensions as well as their overall performance on a five-point evaluation scale: 1 = unsatisfactory, does not meet requirements; 2 = sufficient, just meets requirements; 3 = good, meets requirements; 4 = very good, clearly exceeds requirements; 5 = exceptional, exceeds requirements by far. In the present study, only the mark for the overall assessment was considered, since this value represents a summary of all subcategories and is of importance in the future

military career. A single-item global performance rating is also common in the literature (e.g., Kinicki et al., 2004) and is more suitable for the structural equation analysis than a multiple item scale.

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was measured using nine items that were modified from Mayer and Davis' (1999) Source Trustworthiness Scale. The scale contains three items each for the perceived expertise, the benevolence, and the integrity of the feedback source. Responses on all items ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The internal consistency estimate were $\alpha = .74$ for expertise, $\alpha = .77$ for benevolence, $\alpha = .69$ for integrity, and $\alpha = .88$ for the overall scale.

Appraisal accuracy. In most studies (Elicker et al., 2006; Keeping & Levy, 2000; Kinicki et al., 2004; Stone, Gueutal, & McIntosh, 1984) accuracy refers to the recipient's belief that the evaluation reflects the true performance. However, this assumption is based – similar to global satisfaction and fairness appraisals – on comparisons with personal expectations and the self image. To register accuracy more objectively, a scale developed by Nathan et al. (1991) was used, and the feedback recipients were asked to what extent the evaluation was based on work results, task-specific behavior, and their own skills and abilities. The fourth item on Nathan et al.'s (1991) scale was dropped, since no goal agreements are made at this point. The feedback recipients evaluated accuracy on a 6-item scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The internal consistency reliability estimate ($\alpha = .86$) was somewhat higher than in the original study (Nathan et al., 1991).

Voice. Feedback recipients completed two voice measures. Non-instrumental voice was measured using the 8-item scale developed by Korsgaard and Roberson (1995). A sample item is: "We talked about what I consider my strengths and weaknesses." The internal reliability estimate was $\alpha = .86$. The instrumental voice was measured with the 5-item scale by Korsgaard and Roberson (1995). A sample item is: "I felt I could have influenced the appraisal discussion." The internal consistency estimate was $\alpha = .80$. Responses on both scales were given on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Goal quality. The evaluation instrument obliges every participant to formulate 2 to 3 goals. Goal quality was surveyed with 3 items from the Goal Quality Scale by Alberternst (2003). These items are originally based on the Goal Setting Questionnaire developed by Locke and Latham (1990). Participants rated on a 6-item scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) to what extent the agreed goals were formulated as "specific," "challenging," and "clear." A reliability of $\alpha = .84$ was found.

Goal commitment. Goal commitment and goal attainment motivation were operationalized with the Goal Commitment Scale by Alberternst (2003). Because of the content-related similarity of two items, only two of the three original items of the scale were used. The phrasings were: "I strongly stand by the set goals" and "I make an effort to reach these goals." All items were evaluated on a 6-item scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The internal consistency estimate was $\alpha = .79$.

Results

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations for scale scores of the measured variables.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Measurement Model Results

Covariance structure analysis was used to examine construct relationships and causal relations. The simultaneous analysis of the hypothesized relations allows estimation of the construct relationships (Bollen, 1989), and the use of latent variables reduces potential measurement errors associated with the regression analyses (Kinicki et al., 2004). First, a latent variable baseline measurement model was fitted to the data. Indicators for the latent constructs trustworthiness and voice were the scale scores in the three sub-dimensions of trustworthiness (expertise, benevolence, and integrity) and in the two measurements of voice (instrumental and non-instrumental voice).

Results indicate that the baseline measurement model accurately reproduced the observed covariance matrix, $\chi^2(63, N = 250) = 114.362, p < .001$, non-standardized fit index (NNFI) = .96, comparative fit index (CFI) = .97, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .03 and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .05.

The NNFI and CFI surpassed the .95 criterion, and the SRMR and RMSEA were below .08 respectively .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Furthermore, all standardized factor loadings were statistically significant, with loadings ranging from .76 to .87 (goal commitment).

Structural Model Results

In testing the fit of the model in Figure 2, we allowed the error terms for perceived accuracy, voice, and goal quality to covary in order to reflect the associations among the process variables.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

Because different studies (Elicker et al., 2006; Kacmar, Witt, Zivnuska, & Gully, 2003) pointed to social context and appraisal not being independent of each other, correlation between performance appraisal and source trustworthiness was also allowed. Similar to the measurement model, the fit of the structural model was quite good, $\chi^2(67, N = 250) = 126.11, p < .001$, NNFI = .96, CFI = .97, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .06. Further, all model paths yielded significant parameter estimates. These results provide support for the proposed model and hypotheses 1-7. In addition, alternative model tests demonstrated that a model with an added path from performance appraisal to voice resulted in an improved fit relative to the postulated structural model, $\chi^2(66, N = 250) = 119.45, p < .001$, NNFI = .96, CFI = .97, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .05. The significance of the improvement in model fit can be judged using a chi-square difference test. The difference in chi-square ($126.11 - 119.45 = 6.66$) and the added path were statistically significant.

The right side of Figure 2 reveals the results for hypotheses 1-3. The perceived accuracy of the feedback (.32, $p < .05$), voice (.20, $p < .05$), and goal quality (.51, $p < .05$) were significantly related to goal commitment.

The left side of Figure 2 shows that performance appraisal influenced perceived accuracy (.28, $p < .05$) and voice (.16, $p < .05$). These findings confirm hypothesis 4. As hypotheses 5-7 predicted, trustworthiness of the source positively

affected the perceived accuracy (.41, $p < .05$), voice (.49, $p < .05$), and goal quality (.49, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis 8 predicted that the influence of the context variables on goal commitment is mediated by the process variables. In order to test this hypothesis, analyses were conducted using the procedure described by Mayer and Davis (1999) based on Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation procedure. The procedure compares the fit of alternative substantive models with one another and also examines the significance of specific path estimates. Three substantive models were evaluated: (a) a direct effects model, where we estimated a path from the context variables to the postulated process variables and goal commitment, (b) an indirect effects model, which represents the proposed mediation model, and (c) a saturated model, in which both direct and indirect effects of the context variables on goal commitment were estimated. The nested models are statistically compared with chi-square difference tests. The direct and the indirect effects model cannot be compared, because they are not nested (Mayer & Davis, 1999). The comparison between the direct effects and the saturated model (see Table 2) yielded a chi-square of 163.35, with three degrees of freedom ($p < .001$).

[Insert Table 2 here]

The significance of this result indicates that the effect of the context variables on goal commitment was mediated by the process variables. The second comparison, between the indirect effects model and the saturated model, yielded a chi-square of 3.23, with two degrees of freedom (*ns*). The lack of significance of this result indicates that the more complex, saturated model did not improve the fit over that attained by the simpler, indirect effects model. In the saturated model,

neither of the paths from the context variables to goal commitment was significant. The results from both the chi-square tests and the examination of specific paths indicate that the relationship between the context variables and goal commitment is fully mediated by the process variables; these findings support hypothesis 8.

Discussion

The present study investigated empirically the effect of context and process factors of a performance appraisal process on goal commitment. More precisely, we examined whether the influence of both performance appraisal result and source trustworthiness on goal commitment can be explained on the basis of their influence on perceived accuracy of the performance appraisal, opportunity for voice during the performance appraisal discussion, and goal quality.

To date, no study has examined the effect of these five context and process factors on goal commitment in a single model. Model fit indices reveal that our model accurately reproduced the observed covariance matrix.

In support of hypothesis 1, employees are motivated to achieve the set goals if they have the impression that their performance has been evaluated accurately. However, if they believe the appraisal to be inaccurate, they are likely to show no reaction or even a negative reaction (Atwater et al., 2000; Brett & Atwater, 2001). This is why it is particularly important that superiors makes it clear to the employees that the evaluation is based on the employees' work results, conduct, and skills and abilities.

Consistent with procedural justice theory (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Thibaut & Walker, 1975) and hypothesis 2, voice is also positively associated with goal commitment. This result supports the conclusion that when the superior is

interested in the employee's opinion, the employee will feel treated fairly and respectfully and will be more likely to put effort into attaining the set goals. Furthermore, participation provides the feedback recipient with knowledge about how to approach the task and enhance the task-specific self-efficacy expectations (Lind et al., 1990).

Hypothesis 3 is supported by the positive relationship between goal quality and goal commitment. The standardized path coefficients show that goal quality is the strongest predictor of goal commitment. This finding reinforces the assumption that specific and challenging goals evoke a stronger identification with the goal and promise higher instrumentalities than global and simple goals (Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987; Klein et al., 1999). In practice this means that setting goals alone is not enough; the goals formulated should also be specific and challenging.

As predicted in hypothesis 4, the performance appraisal rating is positively related to the perceived appraisal accuracy. Since self-perception is often positively biased (Yammarino & Atwater, 1997), there is a danger of negative feedback being dismissed as being inaccurate and thus ignored. Therefore, there is a need for further explanation, namely, the superior should put forth an effort to make the appraisal understandable, especially in the case of a negative appraisal. Although this was not mentioned, a significant path from the appraisal result to voice could be observed as well. This result indicates that employees with favorable appraisals experience a greater opportunity to present their own opinions and views in the feedback session. Kikoski (1999) argues that superiors are reluctant and anxious about the appraisal interview and often dislike the face-to-face encounter. It seems plausible that superiors feel particularly awkward when giving negative feedback

and seek to cover up their own insecurity by choosing an authoritative and directive dialogue style. Additionally, negative feedback can lead the employee to become discouraged (Brett & Atwater, 2001) and withdraw. The strong correlation between the performance appraisal result and source trustworthiness indicates that people with negative feedback have a poorer trust relationship than people with better performance ratings. The question arises for future research as to what extent the appraisal result and perceived trustworthiness interact in their effect on attitudes and behaviors during the performance appraisal discussion. In support of hypothesis 5, 6, and 7, trustworthiness affects the perceived appraisal accuracy, voice, and goal quality. Once again, this makes it clear that the conditions for an efficient appraisal process must be fulfilled before the feedback intervention takes place. If the feedback recipients do not think of the evaluator as being trustworthy, they will think of the evaluator's appraisal as less accurate and show only limited interest in communicating openly during the interview or in setting specific and challenging goals. Conversely, benevolence, integrity, and expertise are necessary qualities of a superior to ensure an efficient feedback appraisal and review.

As predicted in hypothesis 8, the process variables mediated the effect of the context factors on goal commitment. These results provide empirical evidence that the appraisal result and trustworthiness of the superior do not affect goal commitment directly. However, they may have an effect on attitudes, perceptions, and behavior during the discussion and therefore influence goal commitment indirectly.

Implications

Several managerial implications can be derived from the results of the study. The first involves the performance appraisal discussion. In order to ensure goal commitment, superiors must demonstrate to the employee that their evaluations are based on an accurate foundation. Furthermore, they should give the subordinate the possibility to express an opinion, correct misconceptions or inaccuracies, and present additional information (Roberts, 1994). By doing so, superiors show interest and respect and guarantee that the subordinate perceives the evaluation process as being fair. However, the most important condition for the employee to be motivated is the quality of the goals. Because vague goals could result in subordinates not knowing what is expected of them, it is important that superiors negotiate specific goals. Additionally, the goals should present a challenge to subordinates, so that they can expect significant practical benefits (Mento et al., 1992).

The second implication relates to the feedback favorability. Our results showed that positive feedback is perceived to be more accurate than negative feedback. Nevertheless, managers can not avoid giving negative feedback. Therefore, it is important especially in the case of negative feedback that superiors can justify the appraisal on the basis of objective observations and by already having pointed out weaknesses by giving regular daily feedback. A third implication is that superiors should maintain trusting relationships with subordinates before the performance appraisal process and show benevolence, integrity, and expertise. In this way, subordinates will trust in superiors' judgment, communicate openly, and be willing to set challenging and measurable goals.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite the contributions of the current study, some limitations must be noted. First, the results are based on a relatively small sample within the Swiss Armed Forces. Participants are not professional officers but serve sporadically as militia personnel. They often become familiar with their superior only shortly before qualification. Although most of the cadres serve voluntarily, it can not be ruled out that some complete the further training reluctantly and only because obligated, which should have consequences on their attitudes and conduct during the evaluation process. Thus, the current study needs to be replicated in a larger sample with other jobs. Second, the formulation of effective goals presents difficulties, as it depends on the level of performance and weaknesses of the subordinate. In the present study only the perceived quality of the goals was examined, without considering the actual content of the goals. Third, in order to determine the long-term consequences of the appraisal it would be necessary to conduct a longitudinal study on the achievement of goals at a later stage. In that way it could be determined whether subordinates have actually put an effort into achieving the goals. Fourth, it seems plausible that some variables, such as appraisal accuracy, voice, or source trustworthiness, have in addition a moderating effect on the correlation between the feedback rating and goal commitment. This should be examined in further studies. Fifth, various authors (e.g., Ilgen et al., 1979; Kinicki et al., 2004; Smither et al., 2005) assume that the feedback recipients' characteristics could affect attitudes, comportment, and reactions during the feedback process. Future research should investigate the role of such individual differences concerning feedback reactions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study enhance the existing performance appraisal literature in several ways. First, we presented a feedback process model that demonstrates the direct and indirect effects of important context and process factors on goal commitment after a performance appraisal. Although goal commitment is presented as one of the most important determinants of performance improvement (Locke, Latham, & Erez, 1988), this is the first study that examines goal commitment as a feedback reaction after performance feedback. Second, based on the study findings, different practical implications can be drawn for the conduct of performance appraisals. The results demonstrate which context and process factors should be addressed during a feedback process in order to make sure employees are motivated to achieve the commonly set goals after a performance appraisal discussion.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficients, and Correlations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Appraisal	3.10	0.59	—	—							
2. Expertise	4.80	0.71	.74	.26							
3. Benevolence	4.97	0.71	.77	.30	.72						
4. Integrity	4.88	0.67	.69	.23	.68	.66					
5. Accuracy	4.59	0.92	.86	.40	.42	.40	.33				
6. Instr. Voice	4.38	0.82	.80	.33	.43	.44	.33	.55			
7. Non-Instr. Voice	4.13	0.80	.86	.23	.30	.39	.26	.51	.66		
8. Goal Quality	4.15	1.02	.84	.22	.39	.39	.37	.45	.47	.52	
9. Goal Commitment	4.58	1.02	.79	.27	.35	.38	.31	.60	.57	.56	.67

Note. $N = 250$. Instr. Voice = Instrumental Voice; Non-Instr. Voice = Non-Instrumental Voice. Overall index scores are derived for each individual by summing responses across all items in each scale. All correlations are significant at the .001 level.

Table 2

Model Statistics and Standardized Path Coefficients

Measure	Direct	Indirect	Saturated
χ^2	279.57	119.45	116.22
<i>df</i>	67	66	164
Appraisal-Accuracy	.27*	.28*	.28*
Appraisal-Voice	.15*	.16*	.16*
Appraisal-Goal commitment	.14*		-.01
Trustworthiness-Accuracy	.46*	.41*	.42*
Trustworthiness-Voice	.54*	.49*	.50*
Trustworthiness-Goal quality	.55*	.49*	.51*
Trustworthiness-Goal commitment	.50*		-.11
Accuracy-Goal commitment		.32*	.35*
Voice-Goal commitment		.20*	.23*
Goal quality-Goal commitment		.51*	.54*

Note. * $p < .05$.

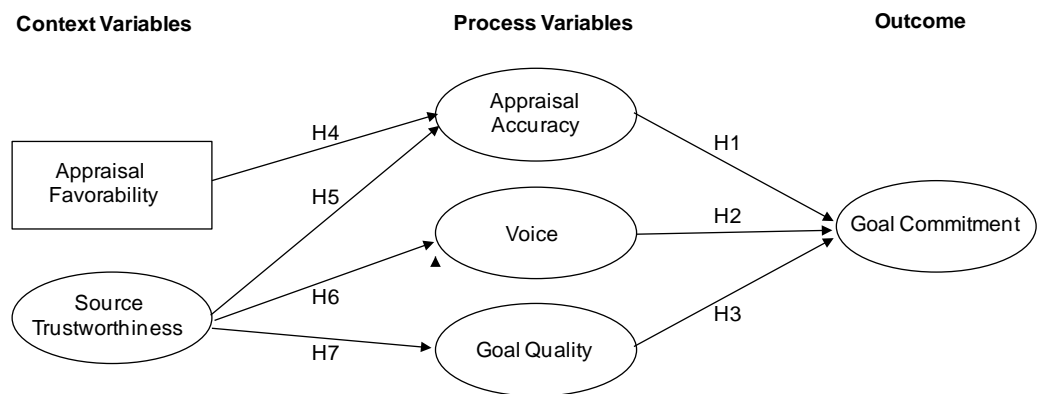


Figure 1. Theoretical model of goal commitment following a performance appraisal session. H = hypothesis.

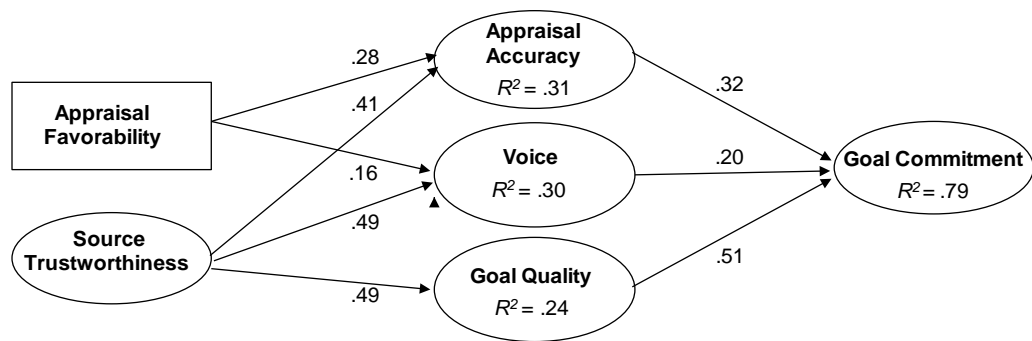


Figure 2. Completely standardized structural model results. Standardized path coefficients are all statistically significant. Not shown are the correlations between perceived accuracy and voice (.56), voice and goal quality (.52), perceived accuracy and goal quality (.37), and performance appraisal and source trustworthiness (.32).

3

The Role of Core Self-Evaluations in Predicting Performance Appraisal Reactions

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Abstract

Although performance appraisal reactions have garnered substantial attention in recent years, research has rarely considered the role of individual differences regarding feedback responses. The findings from a sample of 250 military cadres revealed that higher core self-evaluations were positively associated with both higher satisfaction and goal commitment following the performance appraisal discussion. As expected, opportunity to voice opinion during the appraisal discussion mediated a portion of the hypothesized relationship, suggesting that individuals with high core self-evaluations were more satisfied and motivated because they were more likely to experience voice during the appraisal process. Further, contrary to our hypothesis, the results revealed that core self-evaluations also moderated the relationship between voice and goal commitment, in that individuals with low self-evaluations were more affected by their perceived voice than people with high self-evaluations were.

Keywords: Core self-evaluations, performance appraisal, voice, Swiss Armed Forces

The Role of Core Self-Evaluations in Predicting Performance Appraisal Reactions

Performance appraisal processes are ubiquitous in organizations and widely believed to be essential for both individual and organizational performance (Kinicki, Prussia, Wu, & McKee-Ryan, 2004). However, several empirical studies and meta-analyses revealed that not all feedback receivers respond in the desired way and that in some cases feedback could even have detrimental effects on performance (e.g., Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Smither, London, & Reilly, 2005). Therefore, performance research increasingly started to examine factors that were believed to have a crucial impact on individuals' feedback reactions, such as feedback favorability (e.g., Brett & Atwater, 2001; Elicker, Levy, & Hall, 2006, Smither et al., 2005), opportunity to participate (e.g., Cawley, Keeping, & Levy, 1998; Elicker et al., 2006; Kamen & Annen, 2009, Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995), and characteristics of the feedback source (e.g., Elicker et al., 2006; Nathan, Mohrman, & Milliman, 1991). However, most studies focused primarily on variables that are external to feedback recipients. Although it seems clear that not all people have the same needs and expectations, existing research has tended to ignore the influence of individual differences on feedback responses (Bono & Colbert, 2005). As some of the few authors that considered the impact of individual difference characteristics of feedback recipients, Ilgen, Fisher, and Taylor (1979) emphasized in their seminal feedback reaction model that especially individuals' self-esteem, social anxiety, locus of control, and self-efficacy may play a role in people's responses to feedback.

Based on this suggestion, in the present study we examined the influence of the construct *core self-evaluations* on employee satisfaction and goal commitment following the performance appraisal discussion. Our primary purpose was to identify various ways in which disposition may affect recipients' affective and motivational reactions.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Overview of Core Self-Evaluations

Originally introduced by Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997) as a dispositional basis of job satisfaction, the concept of core self-evaluations refers to “fundamental premises that individuals hold about themselves and their functioning in the world” (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998, p. 168). According to Judge et al. (1997), core self-evaluations is a broad, higher-order trait comprised of four evaluation-focused, fundamental, and broad personality traits: self-esteem (i.e., the favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self; Rosenberg, 1965); generalized self-efficacy (i.e., the evaluation of one's capability to mobilize motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise general control over many events; Judge et al., 1997); emotional stability (i.e., the tendency to be emotionally stable and steadfast as opposed to insecure, guilty, and timid; Costa & McCrae, 1988); and locus of control (i.e., the degree to which people believe they can control events and outcomes in their lives; Rotter, 1966).

Although these four traits show substantial strong correlations with one another (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003), they have typically been studied in isolation (Judge & Bono, 2001). The fact that confirmatory factor analyses have consistently verified that the four core traits load on a common factor (e.g., Erez &

Judge, 2001; Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998) suggests that the individual core traits indicate a common factor. According to Judge et al. (1997), people's core self-evaluations influence their interpretation of everything else, and due to its breadth, the construct should be a better and more consistent predictor of other beliefs and evaluations than any individual core trait. Indeed, results of a laboratory and a field study by Erez and Judge (2001) yielded some evidence that the core self-evaluations factor is in fact a stronger predictor of motivation and performance than any average core trait.

Mechanisms of the Relationships Between Core Self-Evaluations and Feedback Responses

In their seminal article, Judge et al. (1997) claimed three alternative but not mutually exclusive mechanisms by which core self-evaluations could affect other evaluations: a direct effect, a mediated effect, and a moderating effect. In the following sections we will describe each mechanism in detail and state our hypotheses regarding how people's core self-evaluations might affect their motivational and affective performance appraisal reactions.

The direct effects of core self-evaluations. First of all, Judge et al. (1997) proposed a main effect of core self-evaluations on other evaluations and behaviors through a process of emotional generalization. According to the authors, individuals with low core self-evaluations feel unable to deal with the world and therefore tend to see it as less benevolent and exciting. Consistent with this assumption, Judge and his colleagues found high scores on core self-evaluations to be related to increased levels of life satisfaction (Judge, Locke, et al., 1998; Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005), job satisfaction (Judge, Locke, et al., 1998; Judge,

Bono, & Locke, 2000; Judge et al., 2005; Piccolo, Judge, Takahashi, Watanabe, & Locke, 2005), and happiness (Piccolo et al., 2005).

Although rarely examined, there is some evidence suggesting that core self-evaluations may also help to explain specific evaluations, such as satisfaction following a performance appraisal discussion. For example, a study by Smith and Sarason (1975) revealed that individuals with high scores in social anxiety perceived the same interpersonal feedback more negatively than people with low social anxiety did. Furthermore, findings of an experimental laboratory study by Jussim, Coleman, and Nassau (1987) showed that students low in self-esteem interpreted the teacher's feedback on their performance on an analogies test less favorably than did students high in self-esteem, regardless of the type of feedback they received. We are aware of only one study (Bono & Colbert, 2005) that examined the effect of the construct core self-evaluations on feedback satisfaction. Results of that study revealed a positive but non significant correlation between individuals' core self-evaluations and their satisfaction with multi-source feedback. However, this finding must be interpreted with caution, because the multi-source feedback was just part of a task within an MBA program and the appraisal was reported back within a written report without the possibility for the individual to ask for further explanation. It is conceivable that the affective responses to feedback are more contingent with individual dispositions if the feedback is given within a serious performance appraisal discussion.

Considering the above findings, we believe that individuals with positive self-evaluations are more likely to notice and recall positive aspects of the feedback and the feedback process than people with a negative self-concept are. Further, we

suggest that people with trust in their ability to improve may also be more likely to see the potential benefit of a performance appraisal process and therefore be more satisfied following the process.

In addition, the findings of various studies revealed a positive relationship between individuals' core self-evaluations and other important motivational and behavioral criteria within the work context, such as higher goal commitment (Bono & Colbert, 2005; Erez & Judge, 2001), goal attainment (Judge et al., 2005), performance (Erez & Judge, 2001; Judge, 2009; Judge et al., 2003), and work and career success (Judge & Hurst, 2007, 2008).

Since goal commitment is a function of the expectancy and the attractiveness of goal attainment (Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987), it seems obvious that individuals with high confidence in their ability to change tend to be more willing to commit themselves to their goals within the appraisal context than people with a low self-concept.

Overall, we argue that individuals' core self-evaluations play a relevant role regarding feedback recipients' emotional and motivational responses and therefore put forward the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Core self-evaluations positively predict satisfaction following a performance appraisal discussion.

Hypothesis 1b: Core self-evaluations positively predict goal commitment following a performance appraisal discussion.

The indirect effects of core self-evaluations. As a second possible mechanism by which core self-evaluations could affect evaluations and behaviors, Judge et al. (1997) proposed an indirect or mediated effect in that core self-evaluations are

believed to impact specific actions leading to these global evaluations and behaviors. In accordance with this assumption, Judge and colleagues found employees with high core self-evaluations to set more self-concordant goals (Judge et al., 2005) and to obtain more complex jobs (Judge et al., 2000), which in turn fostered their job and life satisfaction.

In the present study, we would apply Judge et al.'s (1997) argumentation to the context of performance appraisal, arguing that core self-evaluations may also affect feedback reactions by influencing individuals' actions, especially participation, during the appraisal discussion.

It is well-established in the procedural justice literature that voicing one's opinion during the appraisal discussion is a crucial antecedent of satisfaction with appraisal, session, and system (Cawley et al., 1998; Elicker et al., 2006; Jawahar, 2006; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995), motivation to improve (Cawley et al., 1998; Elicker et al., 2006), and goal commitment (Kamer & Annen, 2009). Two different interpretations attempt to explain why voice is valued; they are often referred to as the instrumental and non-instrumental interpretation (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995; Lind & Tyler, 1988). The instrumental explanation posits that voice is valued because it provides the perception of control and potential influence on the decision. The non-instrumental explanation assumes that voice is esteemed for its own sake because it conveys a feeling of belonging to a valued group and enhances self-worth. The research (Cawley et al., 1998; Elicker et al., 2006; Jawahar, 2006; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995) has failed to demonstrate the dominance of one mechanism conclusively, showing that voice is valued thanks to both its instrumental and non-instrumental benefits.

Despite growing interest in reactions to voice, research has widely ignored the question concerning the extent to which people's voice behavior is affected by their individual dispositions. However, considering Judge, Locke et al.'s (1998) proposition that people who do not see themselves as worthy and able to cope with life's exigencies bring a "negative frame" to the events and situations they encounter, as well as the fact that people with low core self-evaluations may also exhibit more neurotic behaviors (e.g., nervousness, ill-temperedness, and self-pity) that could block favorable social interaction (Judge, Erez et al., 1998), we suggest that people with low core self-evaluations may approach an appraisal discussion in a more apprehensive and less participatory manner than people with a positive self-concept do.

Further, people are thought to claim voice in a decision process to the extent that they expect that their input will be influential (Brockner et al., 1998). Presumably, people with low self-efficacy and external locus of control are less likely to believe that their actions have a meaningful impact on the environment and thus may see little reason to participate in the process.

In addition, people may also differ in their retrospective interpretations of the appraisal discussion, in that – according to the self-verification theory (Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992) – people with a positive self-concept may notably remember interview situations in which they actively participated in the discussion and stated their opinions, and these memories will lead to positive conclusions about themselves and the situation. In contrast, individuals with a negative view of themselves may tend to emphasize situations in which they were not able to

express their views. Based on this argumentation, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a: Voice will partly mediate the relationship between core self-evaluations and satisfaction, so part of the positive influence of core self-evaluations on satisfaction will be due to the greater extent of voice during the appraisal discussion.

Hypothesis 2b: Voice will partly mediate the relationship between core self-evaluations and goal commitment, so part of the positive influence of core self-evaluations on goal commitment will be due to the greater extent of voice during the appraisal discussion.

The moderating effects of core self-evaluations. Addressing an aspect that has rarely been examined, Judge et al. (1997) also proposed that individuals' self-evaluations may influence the way in which various experiences and conditions affect them. One possibility of how core self-evaluations may act as a moderator in the performance appraisal process is the probability that core self-evaluations moderate the effect of voice on feedback reactions.

To date, little is known about what kind of person tends to value voice (Avery, 2003). One might expect that everyone values the opportunity to provide input equally highly, but results of a laboratory and field study by Avery and Quinones (2004) indicate that people differ widely in their desire for and reactions to voice. Avery and Quinones found that individuals with a high value of voice exhibit a significantly stronger relationship between voice and procedural fairness perception than individuals placing less value on voice do. This finding makes it clear that it is of great importance to identify factors influencing this value.

Brockner et al. (1998), for instance, noted that people with high self-esteem tend to believe that they are capable of providing meaningful input and therefore exhibit a strong motivation to have voice. They should therefore be more affected by their experienced level of voice than their low self-esteem counterparts. To confirm this assumption, Brockner et al. examined the moderating effects of self-esteem in reaction to voice during three specific delicate situations (job layoff, cost-cutting, and interpersonal encounter). They found voice to be more positively related to trust in the organization, work motivation, desire to remain with the organization, organizational identification, and satisfaction with an interpersonal encounter among high self-esteem people. Furthermore, results of a laboratory study by Avery (2003) showing a positive correlation between core self-evaluations and value of voice provided some evidence that Brockner et al.'s argumentation could also be extended to the broader construct of core self-evaluations. As people's core self-evaluations comprise not only their self-esteem but also their control beliefs (self-efficacy and locus of control), we suggest that people with high core self-evaluations (due to their belief that their actions will have a favorable impact on the environment) will be more satisfied when they can voice their opinions and will show high goal commitment due to their greater involvement in the appraisal process. We therefore propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: Core self-evaluations will moderate the effect of voice on satisfaction, so individuals with high core self-evaluations will be more affected by the extent of voice than those with low core self-evaluations.

Hypothesis 3b: Core self-evaluations will moderate the effect of voice on goal commitment, so individuals with high core self-evaluations will be more affected by the extent of voice than those with low core self-evaluations.

In an effort to investigate the various ways in which core self-evaluations are believed to affect people's affective and motivational reactions, we surveyed young military leaders before and after their formal performance appraisal discussion and used hierarchical multiple regression analysis to test our hypotheses.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The study was conducted in the context of the Swiss Armed Forces. The sample consisted of 406 participants. All participants were Swiss male citizens taking part in the eight-week unit training of the Swiss Army's basic military training. In total, a complete dataset was gathered for 250 persons (average age 21 years). Sixty-four percent of the respondents held the rank of squad leader, 24% the rank of platoon leader, and 12% held a higher rank.

During unit training, leaders from squad to company level are appraised by their superiors on their performance twice, with an interval of 19 days.

We collected data at two time points, using surveys in both cases. The first data collection was conducted during the third training week, shortly before the officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were evaluated by their direct superiors using a standardized performance qualification form. The results of the performance appraisal itself were introduced to the officers and NCOs in the framework of a structured bilateral appraisal interview of approximately 45

minutes in length and conducted by the superior. To ensure consistency and professionalism in performance appraisals the superiors had to undergo a one-day rater training program and familiarize themselves with the internal performance appraisal guideline (Schweizer Armee, 2008). This guideline recommends that supervisors encourage subordinates to voice their self-evaluations, views, problems, doubts, anxieties, and required support during the interview. At the end of the appraisal interview, superior and subordinate establish two to three individual goals that the subordinate is to achieve in the next appraisal period (such as “delegate more tasks”).

Three weeks later, subsequent to the appraisal discussion, we administered the second survey. Participants were asked to return the questionnaires and a copy of the performance qualification form in a sealed envelope at a collecting point.

Officers and NCOs self-reported their core self-evaluations and military rank during the first data collection and self-reported their voice, satisfaction, and goal commitment during the second data collection.

Measures

Core self-evaluations. Core self-evaluations were measured with the 12-item Core Self-Evaluations Scale by Judge et al. (2003). This scale has the advantage of brevity and predictive validity (Judge, 2009). Some evidence even suggests a better predictive validity than a composite for the four individual core traits (Judge et al., 2003). Sample items are “Overall, I am satisfied with myself”; “When I try, I generally succeed”; “Sometimes I do not feel in control of my work (r)”; and “Sometimes I feel depressed (r).” Each item was scored on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha was .82.

Voice. Voice was measured with the non-instrumental voice scale by Korsgaard and Roberson (1995). The scale consisted of 8 items that asked participants to rate the extent to which they expressed their opinions during the appraisal discussion (regardless of impact on appraisal result). A sample item is, “I told my superior how I would evaluate myself.” The internal reliability estimate was $\alpha = .86$. Participants responded on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Satisfaction. This scale consisted of 6 items and reflected satisfaction with the appraisal result, the appraisal discussion, and the appraisal system. A sample question was “I’m satisfied with the feedback.” The other five questions were phrased as follows, “I have a good feeling about the feedback”; “I’m generally satisfied with the appraisal discussion”; “The appraisal discussion was a satisfying experience”; “Overall, I’m satisfied with the performance appraisal system”; “I think the performance appraisal system is fair.” The items were rated on a 6-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha was .90.

Goal commitment. Goal commitment was operationalized with the Goal Commitment Scale by Alberternst (2003). Because of the content-related similarity of two items, only two of the three original items of the scale were used: “I strongly stand by the set goals” and “I make an effort to reach these goals.” All items were evaluated on a 6-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The internal consistency estimate was $\alpha = .79$.

Control variables. Two control variables were included in all analyses. The first control variable was *supervisors’ evaluation of subordinates’ mean*

performance with regard to nine specific performance dimensions (standardized qualification form; Annen, 2000). Sample dimensions are “social behavior” and “teaching skills.” The institution used a 5-point global rating scale with the following anchors: 1 = unsatisfactory, does not meet requirements; 2 = sufficient, just meets requirements; 3 = good, meets requirements; 4 = very good, clearly exceeds requirements; 5 = exceptional, exceeds requirements by far. Cronbach’s alpha was .90. Second, participants were asked to state their *current military rank*¹ (squad leader, platoon leader, company sergeant major, or company commander).

Since all of our participants were German-speaking, we had to translate some original English scales into German. In the first phase, the scales were translated. Then, using the back-translation method, the scales were retranslated into their original language (English) by two language experts, and the retranslation was then compared to the original statements. Changes were made that were necessary according to the expert opinions. In the third phase, before the questionnaire was implemented, a pilot study ($N = 28$) was conducted to test understandability of the items and reliability of the scales.

Results

Descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and Cronbach’s alphas for all the variables are presented in Table 1. We used hierarchical multiple regression analysis to test Hypotheses 1a to 2b and hierarchical moderated regressions to test Hypotheses 3a and 3b. In all analyses, we entered the two control variables (appraisal result and rank) in the first step. Consistent with Aiken and West (1991), in computing the interaction we centered both personality and voice variables at their means to avoid multicollinearity with their product terms.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Hypotheses 1a and 1b proposed that core self-evaluations would positively predict satisfaction and goal commitment after a performance appraisal discussion. In support of these two hypotheses, results of the regression analyses (Table 2) revealed that core self-evaluations significantly predicted satisfaction ($\beta = .21, p < .01$) and goal commitment ($\beta = .29, p < .01$), after controlling for appraisal result and rank.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Hypotheses 2a und 2b proposed that voice would partly mediate the relationship between core self-evaluations and feedback responses. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), four conditions are necessary to verify mediation: 1) the independent and mediating variable must be significantly related, 2) the independent and dependent variable must be significantly related, 3) the mediator and dependent variable must be significantly related, and 4) the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable should be weaker or not significant when the mediator is added. All regression results for testing mediation are reported in Table 2. Results show that, after controlling for appraisal result and rank, core self-evaluations related positively to satisfaction and goal commitment, as well as to voice ($\beta = .23, p < .01$). Thus, Conditions 1 and 2 were supported. The results in the fourth and sixth columns demonstrate that voice was related positively to satisfaction ($\beta = .44, p < .01$) and goal commitment ($\beta = .47, p < .01$), even after controlling for the control variables and core self-evaluations, which supports Condition 3. Further, results of hierarchical regression analyses revealed that after voice was taken into account, the effects of core self-evaluations on

satisfaction ($\beta = .11, p < .05$) and goal commitment ($\beta = .18, p < .01$) became weaker, albeit still significant, which suggests partial mediation. To further assess the significance of the mediation we applied Sobel's test (Sobel, 1982) for indirect effects. Results indicated that the intervening effect of voice for the relation between core self-evaluations and satisfaction ($z = 4.20, p < .001$) as well as goal commitment ($z = 4.18, p < .001$) was significant, which suggests confirmation of Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

We next tested Hypotheses 3a and 3b, according to which core self-evaluations would moderate the effect of voice on satisfaction and goal commitment so individuals with high core self-evaluations would be more affected by the level of voice than individuals with low core self-evaluations. Hierarchical regression results estimating the interactive effect of core self-evaluations and voice in predicting satisfaction and goal commitment are provided in Table 3.

[Insert Table 3 here]

As Table 3 shows, the interaction did not explain significant incremental variance in satisfaction ($\beta = -.02, ns$). Thus, Hypothesis 3a was not supported by the results. Hypothesis 3b may have been partly supported, in that the interaction indeed predicted goal commitment ($\beta = -.14, p < .01$), but the effect was not in the predicted direction. The modest amount of incremental variance explained by the interaction (1.9 %) should be interpreted with caution, since R^2 is often a misleading measure of effect size, particularly when interpreted in isolation (Ozer, 1985). To shed additional light on the nature of the interaction, we operationalized high and low levels of core self-evaluations and voice as one standard deviation above and below the mean scores of the variables. Figure 1 depicts the stronger

relationship between voice and goal commitment for individuals with low core self-evaluations ($\beta = .69, p < .01$) than for individuals with high core self-evaluations ($\beta = .46, p < .01$). Whereas in the case of high voice individuals showed high goal commitment independent of their self-evaluations, individuals differed in their reaction to low voice, in that people with low self-evaluations were more negatively affected by low voice than people with high core self-evaluations were.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Discussion

Our primary purpose in this study was to examine the mechanism by which core self-evaluations could affect satisfaction and goal commitment following an appraisal discussion.

In support of our hypothesis, we found core self-evaluations to significantly predict affective reaction, in that people with high core self-evaluations expressed higher satisfaction with the appraisal, the discussion, and the system than their low core self-evaluations counterparts did. These findings are consistent with Judge et al.'s (1997) idea of emotional generalization and Judge, Locke, et al.'s (1998) argumentation that people with high core self-evaluations see things more positively because they possess "a dispositional makeup that allows them to do so" (p.31). Further, our results revealed that people with high core self-evaluations had even higher goal commitment than people with low core self-evaluations. This result suggests that the effectiveness of a performance appraisal process depends not only on characteristics of the feedback, the supervisor, or the process but also on characteristics of the receiver of the feedback.

Moreover, we found that some of the differences in satisfaction and goal commitment were due to the effects of core self-evaluations on voice behavior during the appraisal discussion. People with high core self-evaluations reported more voice behavior than people with low core self-evaluations. This result is in line with our hypothesis that individuals with high core self-evaluations may assert a higher claim for voice than their low self-concept counterparts do. As two of the four core traits (self-efficacy and locus of control) deal directly with generalized expectancies, people with high core self-evaluations may tend to expect that their input will be influential and may therefore be more likely to take some action to actively participate in the appraisal discussion. Of course, we could not exclude the possibility that people with high and people with low core self-evaluations differ merely in the perception and interpretation of voice opportunity.

Contrary to expectation, we were not able to confirm a moderating effect of core self-evaluations on the relationship between voice and satisfaction. This result suggests that voice affects satisfaction independently of self-concept. Thus, supervisors must be aware that the opportunity to voice opinion during the appraisal discussion is valued by feedback receivers with both positive and negative self-concepts.

In line with our hypothesis, we found core self-evaluations to be a significant moderator of the relation between voice and goal commitment. However, contrary to our expectations, the moderating effect was not in the anticipated direction, in that the relationship between voice and goal commitment was not stronger for individuals with high core self-evaluations but instead for individuals with low core self-evaluations. Particularly in the case of low voice, people with low self-

concept were significantly more affected with respect to their goal commitment than their high core self-evaluations counterparts. Although this result contradicts our hypothesis, it is in line with Brockner's (1988) plasticity hypothesis stating that people with low self-esteem are more responsive to the social environment, because they are more uncertain of their own beliefs and behaviors and depend more on external positive feedback and approval than people with high self-esteem.

If we assume that people with a low self-concept have lower but more plastic expectations of success (Brockner, 1988), we could hypothesize that the opportunity to voice opinion during the appraisal discussion possibly enhances one's expectancy of goal attainment, since it reflects verbal recognition and belongingness and allows a well-founded bilateral discussion about comprehensibility of the goals, anticipated problems, doubts, anxieties, and required support.

Consistent with this assumption, Vermunt, van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, and Blaauw (2001) found individuals with low self-esteem to rely even more on perceived respect and consideration during a decision process in regard to their perceived outcome fairness than their high self-esteem counterparts.

Implications

Several managerial implications can be derived from our results. First, the results show that it is of great importance for supervisors to be aware of the individual characteristics of their subordinates in order to better understand their attitudes and behaviors during the appraisal process. Since individuals with low self-evaluations tend to be less satisfied and less committed to goals, supervisors

must make sure that especially these employees focus on the positive aspects and benefits of performance appraisal. Supervisors must make particularly sure that low core self-evaluators expect to attain the goals by reinforcing their confidence in their abilities, by promising support, and also by setting clear and specific goals that enable the employees to plan, observe, and evaluate specific steps to goal attainment (Locke & Latham, 2006). It seems needless to say that supervisors ought to strengthen employees' self-worth not just once a year but at any given time during the year.

The second implication relates to employees' participation in the appraisal discussion. Our results made it clear once again that giving employees the opportunity to voice their opinions during the appraisal is crucial for their satisfaction, independent of their self-concept. Instructing employees to do some sort of self-evaluation before the actual review meeting can make it easier to assess the employees' views in a well-structured manner and convey the message that the appraisal discussion is a team effort.

The last important implication relates to the fact that although individuals with low core self-evaluations may tend to behave in a defensive, reserved manner and may exhibit little claim to voice opinions during an appraisal process, they rely even more on voice in regard to their goal commitment than their high core self-evaluations counterparts do. Therefore, to ensure that self-negative individuals are motivated to reach agreed-upon goals, superiors should explicitly invite and encourage people with low core self-evaluations to actively voice their feelings and views and participate in the goal-setting process. In addition, organizations should

train supervisors to recognize personal characteristics and provide opportunities for ratees to voice their opinion.

Limitations and Future Research

The study has several limitations that need to be noted. Our current research design does not allow definitive conclusions regarding causal inferences, but as Judge, Locke, et al. (1998) mentioned, it is virtually impossible to carry out realistic experimental studies in which dispositions are experimentally manipulated. However, to make sure that self-evaluations were not affected by the situation, we surveyed core self-evaluations prior to the performance appraisal process.

A further issue with our study is the reliance on self-report scales. This carries the risk of a common method bias (Avery, 2003) and also the problem that some people struggle to assess their attitudes or in the worst case fake their responses (Judge et al., 1997). However, it should be noted that core self-evaluations have also been successfully related to external criteria such as supervisory measures of job performance, productivity, task activity level, work success, career, and income (Erez & Judge, 2001; Judge, 2009; Judge & Hurst, 2007, 2008). Nevertheless, for future research, we recommend the use of more multi-source methodology. Particularly with regard to the measuring of voice, it would be necessary to observe whether superiors actually differ in their behavior or if differences in reported voice arise from individuals' varying expectations and perceptions.

Since most of the scales had to be translated into German first, an additional limitation is the lack of validation of the scales.

Finally, our study was conducted in a military context with exclusively male participants in a relatively narrow age range and in comparable employment. The homogeneity of the sample and performance appraisal conditions are a great advantage of this study. However, we caution against generalizing our findings to other settings. To ascertain the generalizability of our results, future research should attempt to replicate our study in different vocational settings and groups of persons (Ng, Ang, & Chan, 2008).

It would be interesting to direct further research towards examining how the particular four core self-evaluations traits interact with two different components of voice – non-instrumental and instrumental voice (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995). As Vermunt et al. (2001) already pointed out, it is possible that the interactional component of procedures (e.g., opportunity to voice one's own opinion) relates more to individual differences pertaining to a concern with social evaluation (e.g., self-esteem), whereas reactions to non-interactional aspects of procedures (e.g., opportunity to influence the outcome decision) are more contingent to individual differences related to instrumental concerns (e.g., self-efficacy).

Conclusion

In conclusion, findings from our research enhance the existing performance appraisal literature in several ways. First, the study offers insights into the reasons why some people may respond differently to the same feedback. Second, our results suggest that people may behave differently during an appraisal process depending on their self-concept; this in turn affects their subsequent satisfaction and goal commitment. Third, we found that people who are contingent on their self-concept rely differently on voice during the appraisal discussion. Therefore,

supervisors must consider subordinates' core self-evaluations in order to ensure an effective performance appraisal process. Overall, the results of this study show once again that "self-positive individuals are the beneficiaries of a trend toward cumulative advantage in their careers" (Judge & Hurst, 2008, p. 858).

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Footnote

¹ The German expressions for squad leader, platoon leader, company sergeant majors, and company commanders are *Gruppenführer*, *Zugführer*, *Kompaniefeldweibel*, and *Kompaniekommandant*.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Appraisal	3.10	0.58	(.90)					
2. Rank	1.64	0.47	-.02	—				
3. CSE	4.62	0.55	.26**	-.12	(.82)			
4. Voice	4.13	0.80	.25**	-.09	.29**	(.80)		
5. Satisfaction	4.43	0.93	.49**	-.12	.33**	.56**	(.81)	
6. Goal Commitment	4.58	1.02	.31**	-.12	.34**	.56**	.64**	(.79)

Note. $N = 250$. Figures in parentheses are Cronbach's alphas. Rank was coded 0 = lower cadre (squad leaders), 1 = higher cadre (platoon leaders, company sergeant majors, and company commanders). CSE = core self-evaluations.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 2

Regression Results for Testing Mediation

Factor and statistic	Voice	Satisfaction		Goal Commitment	
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Appraisal result	.19**	.43**	.35**	.23**	.14**
Rank	-.06	-.09	-.06	-.08	-.05
Core self- evaluations	.23**	.21**	.11*	.29**	.18**
Voice			.44**		.47**
<i>F</i>	10.89**	33.31**	51.97**	18.27**	37.09**
<i>R</i> ²	.11**	.29**	.46**	.18**	.38**
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.12**	.28**	.45**	.17**	.37**

Note. *N* = 250. CSE = core self-evaluations. For all variables, standardized coefficient estimates are reported from the last step. Satisfaction: $\Delta R^2 = .17$ ($ps < .001$) for Step 2. Goal Commitment: $\Delta R^2 = .20$ ($ps < .001$) for Step 2. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Regression Results for Testing Moderation

	Satisfaction		Goal Commitment	
Factor and statistic	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Appraisal result	.35**	.35**	.14**	.15**
Rank	-.06	-.06	-.05	-.05
Core self-evaluations	.11*	.10	.18**	.15**
Voice	.44**	.44**	.47**	.47**
Core self-evaluations x Voice		-.02		-.14**
<i>F</i>	51.97**	41.46**	37.09**	31.95**
<i>R</i> ²	.46**	.46**	.38**	.40**
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.45**	.45**	.37**	.39**

Note. *N* = 250. For all variables, standardized coefficient estimates are reported from the last step. Satisfaction: $\Delta R^2 = .00$ for Step 2 (*ps* = *ns*). Goal Commitment: $\Delta R^2 = .02$ (*ps* < .01) for Step 2. * *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01.

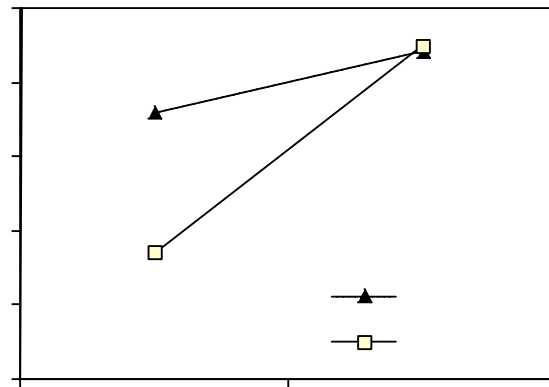


Figure 1. Interaction of core self-evaluations with voice. High and low values of core self-evaluations as well as high and low values of voice are ± 1 standard deviation from the mean.

4

General Discussion

*"It is not simply one or two . . . variables that
"make or break" a PAI [performance appraisal interview],
but the interactive composition of factors that ultimately
leads to a successful or unsuccessful experience."*

(Klein & Snell, 1994, p.160)

This chapter provides a summary of the main results, a global discussion of the findings and practical implications, an overview of the strengths and limitations of the empirical studies, and, finally, a short conclusion.

Summary of the Main Results of this Dissertation Project

The aim of the present dissertation project was to examine employees' reactions to performance appraisal feedback and to shed light on the conditions under which performance feedback positively influences employees' intended effort to accomplish the goals for the period ahead.

Based on theoretical foundations and empirical results, in the first study (Chapter 2), I developed a theoretical feedback reaction model displaying the direct and indirect impact of five context and process variables on ratees' goal commitment subsequent to the appraisal review. The hypothesized model proposed that context factors (appraisal result favorability and source's trustworthiness) do not have a direct, but an indirect effect on the goal commitment by influencing process factors (perceived appraisal accuracy, opportunity to voice opinion during the appraisal review, and quality of development goals). To verify the model I surveyed 250 military cadres before and after their formal performance appraisal discussion. Results of structural equation modeling analyses supported the hypothesized model and revealed that all three process variables explained a great portion of ratees' goal commitment. As expected, the appraisal result and trustworthiness of the source created a context that substantially influenced the recipient's perception of the appraisal, the two-way discussion during the review, and goal setting but did not explain any further variance in goal commitment when

the influence of the process variables were also taken into account. Of all the variables, the quality of goals turned out to be the most significant predictor of ratees' intended effort to accomplish their goals. All in all, context and process variables were able to explain a remarkable 79% of variance in goal commitment.

Since recipients' personality characteristics were not considered in the first study, the second study (Chapter 3) focused on the role of individual differences within the performance appraisal process. Based on Judge, Locke, and Durham's (1997) theory that people's attitudes and behaviors are affected by the fundamental premises they hold about themselves and their functioning in the world, I examined whether and how ratees' core self-evaluations determined their level of satisfaction and goal commitment following their performance appraisal discussion. The findings from the sample of 250 military cadres revealed that core self-evaluations actually explained incremental variance in ratees' satisfaction and goal commitment above and beyond the effect of the appraisal favorability. These positive effects were partly mediated through ratees' experienced voice during the appraisal discussion, suggesting that individuals with high core self-evaluations were more satisfied and motivated because they were more able to express their opinion during the appraisal process. Moreover, results revealed a moderation effect of core self-evaluations on the relationship between voice and goal commitment but not on the relationship between voice and satisfaction. However, contrary to expectations, the relationship between voice and goal commitment was not stronger for people with high core self-evaluations but instead for people with low core self-evaluations.

General Discussion and Implications

The findings of these two empirical studies showed that to capitalize on the full benefits of a performance appraisal system, supervisors must consider the impact of characteristics of the appraisal message, the source, and the process on employees' attitudes and behaviors during and subsequent to the appraisal discussion. The following paragraphs summarize several managerial implications that can be derived from the findings.

First, the results revealed that to be committed to development goals, recipients must believe that the appraisal feedback is an accurate portrayal of their performance. The extent to which the appraisal is perceived to be accurate were revealed to depend on both the appraisal favorability and the trustworthiness of the rater. Thus, supervisors must consider the following issues:

- *Open routine communication ensures that employees have reasonable expectations regarding their appraisal results. However, supervisors should also explicitly explain and justify the current appraisal on the basis of objective observations of ratees' work results, task-specific behaviors, and skills and abilities. Feedback that is more negative than recipients probably expect may need some special attention.*
- *Supervisors should appreciate that if subordinates do not view them as trustworthy (i.e., benevolent, having integrity, and sufficiently skilled to properly appraise their performance), it is quite unlikely that they will accept the appraisal or exhibit goal commitment. Therefore, supervisors should endeavor to establish a trusting relationship already prior to the appraisal discussion.*

In addition, the data revealed that the opportunity to voice opinion during the appraisal discussion is highly predictive for feedback recipients' goal commitment. However, the findings indicated that especially ratees with unfavorable appraisal feedback, less trust in supervisor, and low core self-evaluations seem to experience little participation in the appraisal discussion. Paradoxically, particularly people with low core self-evaluations were found to rely more on voice opportunity than people with a positive self-concept with regard to their goal commitment. These results suggest that although opportunity to express one's opinion might be desirable in general, since it conveys a feeling of fair and respectful treatment, its impact appears to be augmented by simultaneous consideration of recipients' characteristics. Thus,

- *supervisors should explicitly invite subordinates to participate in the appraisal discussion. The filling out of a self-evaluation form may help ratees to express their view in a well-structured manner.*
- *Particularly, low performers and individuals with low core self-evaluations may be less likely to take some action to actively participate in the appraisal discussion. Therefore, supervisors should encourage them to voice their views, problems, doubts, anxieties, and required support. Furthermore, supervisors should embolden them to believe in their own skills and goal attainment.*
- *Supervisors should also appreciate that an invitation to participate is less credible from a supervisor who has not previously encouraged such behavior on the job (Greller, 1975).*

Besides the variables mentioned above, a further factor, goal quality, was revealed to play an essential role in ratees' intended effort to achieve the goals.

This finding suggests that specific and challenging goals evoke stronger identification with the goals and promises higher instrumentalities than simple, global goals (Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987; Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, & Alge, 1999). Similarly to the process variables mentioned above, goal quality was also found to depend on the trustworthiness of the source, suggesting that subordinates' attitudes towards the supervisor result in differing attitudes or behaviors (probably on the part of both parties). Thus, supervisors should consider the following issues:

- *Supervisors should appreciate that specific and challenging goals generally lead to higher goal commitment than unspecific or easy goals. They should clarify what needs to improve and how improvement can be achieved. Furthermore, they should enhance employees' optimism that performance improvement is possible.*
- *Since an effective goal setting process is contingent on both supervisors' and subordinates' willingness to define individual specific and challenging goals, supervisors should ensure a trusting relationship with their subordinates already prior to the appraisal discussion.*

The fact that process variables explained more unique variance in goal commitment than the context variables offers an important insight that has implications for practice. It is widely known that in order to avoid disapproval, some supervisors evaluate their subordinates leniently, even if this has dysfunctional consequences for the ratees and the organization (Jawahar, 2006). The results of the present study suggest that not the appraisal result per se, but rather the perceived accuracy of the appraisal, the handling of the appraisal

discussion, and the agreement of specific and challenging goals determine ratees' feedback reactions.

To sum up, all these results highlight the important role of the supervisor in the appraisal process. Without supervisors' willingness to implement performance appraisal in a sincere fashion, it seems very unlikely that subordinates are motivated to attain their goals and change their behavior. Given that performance appraisal effectivity is crucial for long-term performance and job relevant attitudes and intentions, organizations should educate and train raters to become knowledgeable about evaluating ratees based on established criteria, communicating the appraisal rating, conducting a participative appraisal discussion, and setting effective goals (Jawahar, 2006). This training should also show raters how to deal with subordinates that have an inflated or deflated self-evaluation (London, 2003) or that have less trust in their own skills and abilities.

Strengths

The studies making up this dissertation project have a number of strengths. First of all, the initial study was the first attempt to examine a performance appraisal reaction model that considered the influence of five key appraisal context and process variables (appraisal favorability, perceived source's trustworthiness, appraisal accuracy, voice opportunity, and goal quality) on ratees' motivational reaction at the same time. The use of structural equation modeling allowed all of the hypothesized relationships of the variables to be tested simultaneously and the incremental contribution of each context and process variable in explaining ratees' reactions to be assessed. This kind of complex performance appraisal reaction

model may approximate reality far more precisely and accurately than single studies about the effect of one particular variable. A further benefit of this study was the focus on goal commitment as an important appraisal reaction. Although recipients are usually encouraged to improve on specific development goals (Smither, London, & Reilly, 2005), the research has mainly ignored goal commitment as a reaction to feedback. Moreover, in contrast to most studies, which survey student samples, the present study examined a large number of military cadres in their real-life performance appraisal settings. The results of this kind of field study may be more in line with reality and provide important implications for the future performance appraisal practice in organizations.

The second study examined for the first time various mechanisms by which ratees' core self-evaluations may affect peoples' reactions following an appraisal discussion. Particularly the finding that people with low self-concept tend to perceive less voice during the appraisal discussion but are more contingent on it concerning their goal commitment provides important practical implications for supervisors. It shows that managers should administer the performance appraisal interview based on the characteristics of the participants.

To sum up, in addition to the theoretical relevance of examining the influence of different variables on feedback responses, the results of these studies also have the potential to inform performance appraisal practice regarding the most important issues to be considered during the appraisal discussion.

Limitations and Future Research

The two studies have also several limitations that need to be noted. First, the data was collected in a military setting with exclusively male participants from a relatively narrow age range. Participants serve as militia personnel sporadically and in some cases reluctantly, only because obligated to do their military service. For this reason, generalization of these findings to other settings should be done with caution. There is a need for further studies that replicate these studies with larger samples in various industries.

Second, since militia cadres' military service is limited in time, it was not possible to collect long-term outcomes of the appraisal intervention. It would be of great interest to examine to what extent the handling of the appraisal process has long-term effects on employees' performance, attitudes toward their supervisor, the organization, or their work.

Third, almost all of the data (except for supervisors' appraisal results) was collected using self-report scales. This carries the risk of a common method bias (Avery, 2003) or biased ratees' responses (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). For future appraisal research, it will be recommendable to adopt a multisource multimethod approach to measure supervisors' and ratees' attitudes and behaviors during and subsequent to the appraisal process.

Fourth, the present project examined only the relation and interaction of ratees' core self-evaluations and perceived voice during the appraisal discussion. It seems highly conceivable that people's core self-evaluations may also relate to their motivation to trust somebody, their acceptance of external feedback and goals, and further attitudes and behaviors during the appraisal process.

Moreover, there is a need for further studies examining the systematic relationship among feedback context and process variables. Although accurate performance rating, opportunity to participate, and high quality goal setting might be desirable, in general their impact appears to be augmented by the simultaneous consideration of contextual factors. As a study by Klein and Snell (1994) suggests, for example, there seem to be certain instances when setting high quality goals is especially beneficial. Klein and Snell found that goal setting had a much greater impact on attitudinal reactions for those subordinates who received initially low performance ratings and who reported a poor relationship with their manager. Surprisingly, they found no evidence of an interaction effect of participation and performance or leader-member exchange on employees' attitudes. This contradicts other studies (e.g., Alberternst, 2003) that found a significant interaction effect of perceived trustworthiness of the source and ratees' voice opportunity on their satisfaction with the appraisal review.

Considering the ambiguous state of research, future research should clarify to what extent different features of the appraisal process impact attitudes and behaviors of people depending on their performance, self-concept, and trust in their manager.

Conclusion

Performance appraisal stands as one of organizations' most powerful tools for enhancing employees' motivation and performance. The process is believed to help employees identify their individual strengths, weaknesses, and training needs, and to set development goals, clarify roles and relationships, reduce prejudices,

improve communication, create trust, and enhance employees' satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Cleveland, Murphy, & Williams, 1989; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Roberts & Pavlak, 1996). Opponents of performance appraisal believe that such interventions tend instead to engender dysfunctional conflicts and competitions (Roberts, 1994). Coens and Jenkins, (2002, p. 18), for example, even argue that performance appraisals "destroy human spirit and, in the span of a 30-minute meeting, can transform a vibrant, highly committed employee into a demoralized, indifferent wallflower who reads the want ads on the weekend". I agree that if not handled properly, performance appraisals may cause a spate of undesirable unintended effects. However, if done correctly, the appraisal process may also offer an invaluable opportunity to appreciate, learn, and grow - on both sides of the table.

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Appendix

(English version)

Appendix A: Letter of Invitation to the Survey

Dear Participant,

Performance appraisal and feedback meetings have become an increasingly important part of human resources development in the Armed Forces. These tools should help the appraisees to perceive their strengths and weaknesses and to improve themselves, profiting from these feedbacks. In order for appraisal tools to be effective and useful, they have to meet high quality standards. This questionnaire should help to assess the quality of the performance appraisal meetings and guarantee a high standard.

Further, you can use this survey as an opportunity to examine your own expectations and attitudes regarding feedback given by your superior.

This survey is part of a doctoral dissertation at the University of Zurich; the results will be used for scientific evaluations. We have therefore added some questions regarding your personality. Some questions may seem repetitive; nevertheless, try to answer each question as honestly as possible.

All answers will be treated in strict confidentiality and will enter statistics in an anonymized fashion. After the evaluation, all questionnaires will be destroyed. There is no possibility to draw any conclusions regarding your person.

Completing the questionnaire will take you no more than 30 minutes.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us! We would like to thank you in advance for your valuable contribution.

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Appendix B: Questionnaire 1
(to be completed before the performance appraisal)

Relationship between you and your superior

The following questions refer to your superior. Your superior in this questionnaire is defined as the person who conducts the performance appraisal.

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partly disagree</i>	<i>Partly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
¹ My superior knows what is needed to make my work a success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² My superior is particularly interested in my well-being.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ My superior keeps his promises.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ My superior does not care about my needs and wishes. (r)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁵ I trust my superior to be capable of evaluating my performance fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁶ My superior's words do not particularly correspond to his actions. (r)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁷ My superior has reasonable principles to guide his actions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁸ I trust my superior to always treat me fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁹ My superior is well qualified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 1. Scale measuring source trustworthiness, including the sub dimensions expertise (items 1, 5 & 9), benevolence (items 2, 4 & 8), and integrity (items 3, 6 & 7). The items were modified from Mayer and Davis' (1999) Source Trustworthiness Scale. r = reverse-scored.

Your attitude and personality

The following statements refer to your character traits. Please state how strongly you agree or disagree with these statements.

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partly disagree</i>	<i>Partly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
¹ I am confident that I will obtain the success I deserve in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² Sometimes I feel depressed. (r)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ When I try, I generally succeed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ Sometimes when I fail I feel worthless. (r)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁵ I complete tasks successfully.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁶ Sometimes I do not feel in control of my work. (r)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁷ Overall, I am satisfied with myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁸ I am filled with doubts about my competence. (r)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁹ I determine what will happen in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹⁰ I do not feel in control of my success in my career. (r)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹¹ I am capable of coping with most of my problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹² There are times when things look pretty bleak and hopeless to me. (r)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 2. Core Self-Evaluations Scale (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003). r = reverse-scored.

Personal data

Your current position:

- ☐ Company commander
- ☐ Platoon leader
- ☐ Chief sergeant major
- ☐ Squad leader

Your age:

- ☐ 22 or younger
- ☐ 23-25 years old
- ☐ 26-28 years old
- ☐ 29-31 years old

Your highest level of education achieved:

- ☐ Apprenticeship
- ☐ Upper secondary vocational certificate
- ☐ Upper secondary school leaving certificate
- ☐ University of applied sciences
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other: _____

Figure 3. Demographic information.

Appendix C: Performance appraisal form

SCHWEIZERISCHE ARMEE
ARMÉE SUISSE



ESERCITO SVIZZERO
ARMADA SVIZRA

Performance appraisal for (prospective) NCOs and officers during basic training and refresher courses

Appraisal conducted by superior

Basic Training

Kind of service:

- ☐ Intermediate appraisal
☐ Final appraisal

Prospective:

- ☐ Cpl
☐ Sgt
☐ SGM
☐ QMS
☐ CSM
☐ WO
☐ SWO
☐ MWO
☐ CWO
☐ Lt
☐ OC
☐ CO
☐ ADC on unit level
☐ ADC on major unit level
☐ GS of
☐ General

Refresher Courses

Kind of service:

Function as:

- ☐ Intermediate appraisal
☐ Final appraisal

Prospective:

- ☐ CPL
☐ Sgt
☐ SFC
☐ SGM
☐ QMS
☐ CSM
☐ WO
☐ SWO
☐ MWO
☐ CWO
☐ OC
☐ CO
☐ Unit cdr
☐ ADC on unit level
☐ ADC on major unit level
☐ GS of
☐ General

Appraisal scale

5 excellent	greatly exceeds expectations (seldom equaled by others in comparable function)
4 very good	significantly exceeds expectations
3 good	meets expectations
2 satisfactory	barely meets expectations
1 unsatisfactory	falls short of expectations

	Remarks
A. Self and social competence	
1. Attitude ...is considered to be reliable and honest. ...is appreciated as a loyal superior, colleague, and subordinate. ...thinks for himself/herself and acts independently. ...calmly accepts criticism and looks for solutions. ...shows initiative and commitment, considers setbacks as challenges.	
	1-----2-----3-----4-----5
2. Social behavior ...is friendly and honest irrespective of position.... ...is open with others and shows comprehension. ...cares for others. ...notices conflicts, copes with conflicts in a factual and solution-oriented manner. ...can profitable integrate himself/herself in a team.	
	1-----2-----3-----4-----5
3. Intellectual capacity ... grasps subject matters quickly and completely. ... can transform knowledge into practice. ... produces solutions. ... learns from mistakes.	
	1-----2-----3-----4-----5
B. Decision-making and responsibility	
1. Leadership ...can convince and convey meaning. ...is a role model. ...remains reliable and concentrated even under stress. ...assesses subordinates in a thorough and fair way.	
	1-----2-----3-----4-----5

<p>2. Communicative skills</p> <p>...expresses himself/herself in an open and clear manner, is an active listener.</p> <p>...informs regularly, timely, and in accordance with the needs of the hierarchy.</p> <p>...his/her body language is natural.</p>	<p>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</p>
<p>3. Leadership skills</p> <p>...issues clear and timely orders.</p> <p>...gives his/her subordinates clear and reasonable tasks.</p> <p>...checks performances reasonably and constructively.</p>	<p>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</p>
<p>4. Instructional and educational skills</p> <p>...sets adequate aims and pursues them in a consequent manner.</p> <p>...teaches comprehensibly, in accordance with sound methodological principles, and learner- focused.</p> <p>...establishes ideal conditions.</p> <p>...lives essential values and puts across meaning.</p> <p>...takes influence on subordinates' values and fosters own responsibility.</p>	<p>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</p>
<p>C. Professional skills</p>	
<p>1. Professional performances</p> <p>...has sound military knowledge.</p> <p>...has good knowledge regarding function-specific areas.</p> <p>...is familiar with the main field manuals and can put the contents into practice.</p> <p>...is ready to constantly update himself/herself in subject area.</p>	<p>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</p>
<p>2. Scores on inspections, tests, physical fitness tests</p> <p>- Marksmanship</p> <p>- Theory tests</p> <p>- Practice tests</p> <p>- PT tests</p>	<p>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</p>
<p>D. Overall assessment:</p> <p>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</p>	

E. Suggestions for improvements (aims / recommendations / concrete measures)		
F. Recommendation for further training / recommendation for promotion		

Appraiser: Date and signature	Appraisee: Date and signature	Approval: Date and signature

Suitability for further promotion to		
By	Suitability	Date and signature
	<input type="checkbox"/> suitable <input type="checkbox"/> unsuitable	
	<input type="checkbox"/> suitable <input type="checkbox"/> unsuitable	

Recommendation for promotion to		
By	Recommended	Date and signature
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	

Approval of recommendation		
By	Recommendation approved	Date and signature
	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	

Figure 4. Standardized performance appraisal form of the Swiss Armed Forces (Annen, 2000).

Appendix D: Questionnaire 2
(to be completed after the performance appraisal)

Satisfaction regarding performance appraisal and system

The following questions refer to your attitude towards the performance appraisal meeting and the performance appraisal system. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements.

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partly disagree</i>	<i>Partly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
¹ I am satisfied with the appraisal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² I have a good feeling as to the appraisal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ Generally I am satisfied with the appraisal meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ In my view the appraisal meeting was a satisfying experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁵ Overall I am satisfied with the appraisal performance appraisal system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁶ I think the performance appraisal system is fair.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 5. Scale measuring global satisfaction after appraisal meeting, including the sub dimensions appraisal satisfaction (items 1 & 2), discussion satisfaction (items 3 & 4), and system satisfaction (items 5 & 6).

Questions regarding conditions and contents of appraisal meeting

The following statements refer to conditions and contents of your appraisal meeting. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements.

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partly disagree</i>	<i>Partly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
¹ I suggested how to accomplish my tasks differently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² I was able to talk about my major areas of responsibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ We talked about my strengths and weaknesses as I see them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ We talked about tasks which I find difficult to accomplish.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁵ I could bring in my point of view.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁶ I mentioned which areas of work I consider to be of foremost importance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁷ I told my superior how I would have assessed myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁸ I was able to use the appraisal meeting to state my ideas and express my feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 6. Scale measuring non-instrumental voice (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995).

Questions regarding conditions and contents of appraisal meeting

The following statements refer to conditions and contents of your appraisal meeting. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements.

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partly disagree</i>	<i>Partly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
⁹ I could bring up new topics.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹⁰ My superior and I are equally responsible for the conduct of the meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹¹ I had some influence on how my superior assessed my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹² I could not influence the meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹³ I was able to influence the meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 7. Scale measuring instrumental voice (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995).

Further questions regarding conditions and contents of appraisal meeting

The appraisal is based on:	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partly disagree</i>	<i>Partly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
¹ • achieved results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² • how I went about my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ • my skills and capacities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ • the aims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 8. Scale measuring appraisal accuracy (Nathan, Mohrman, & Milliman, 1991).

Further questions regarding conditions and contents of appraisal meeting

Below you will find a few questions regarding the quality of the aims which you set in cooperation with your superior.

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partly disagree</i>	<i>Partly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
¹ At the appraisal meeting we set specific goals for my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² The aims set by my superior and myself are challenging.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ I know how to prioritize the aims which were set at the appraisal meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ We set clearly defined aims at the appraisal meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 9. Scale measuring goal quality (3 items from the Goal Quality Scale by Alberternst, 2003).

Below you will find a few questions regarding the quality of the aims which you set in cooperation with your superior.

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Partly disagree</i>	<i>Partly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
⁵ I strongly agree with the stated aims.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁶ I'll make an effort to reach these aims.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 10. Scale measuring goal commitment (Alberternst, 2003).

Appendix
(German version)

Appendix A: Einladung zur Fragebogenuntersuchung

Liebe Teilnehmerin

Lieber Teilnehmer

Qualifikationen und Feedbackgespräche werden zu einem immer wichtigeren Bestandteil der Personalentwicklung in der Armee. Sie sollen den Beurteilten helfen, ihre Stärken und Schwächen zu erkennen und sich mit Hilfe dieses Feedbacks verbessern zu können. Damit solche Interventionen aber auch sinnvoll und nützlich sind, muss der Feedbackprozess einem hohen qualitativen Standard genügen.

Dieser Fragebogen dient dazu, die Qualität der Beurteilungsgespräche feststellen und zukünftig auch sichern zu können.

Ausserdem gibt er Ihnen in diesem Rahmen die Gelegenheit, sich vertiefter mit Ihren Erwartungen bzw. Einstellungen gegenüber dem Vorgesetztenfeedback und Ihrer persönlichen Entwicklung auseinander zu setzen.

Da diese Untersuchung im Rahmen einer Doktorarbeit an der Universität Zürich durchgeführt wird und die Resultate auch für wissenschaftliche Evaluationen verwendet werden, enthält der Fragebogen zusätzliche Fragen zu Ihrer Persönlichkeit. Einige Fragen werden Ihnen vielleicht wiederholt erscheinen. Versuchen Sie aber bitte trotzdem, jede Frage für sich so genau wie möglich zu beantworten.

Alle Ihre Antworten werden vollständig anonymisiert und erscheinen lediglich in einer Gesamtstatistik. Die Antwortbogen werden nach der Auswertung vernichtet. Rückschlüsse auf Ihre Person sind nicht möglich!

Die Beantwortung der Fragen wird Sie nicht länger als 30 Minuten in Anspruch nehmen.

Bei Fragen stehe ich Ihnen jederzeit gerne zur Verfügung und danke Ihnen im Voraus für Ihr Engagement und Ihre seriöse Mitarbeit!

Barbara Kamer

MILAK

Steinacherstr. 101b

8804 Au /ZH

043 833 12 12

barbara.kamer@milak.ethz.ch

⁸ Ich vertraue meinem Vorgesetzten, dass er versucht, mich immer fair zu behandeln.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

⁹ Mein Vorgesetzter ist sehr qualifiziert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Abbildung 1. Skala zur Messung der Vertrauenswürdigkeit des Vorgesetzten mit den Subdimensionen Expertise (Items 1, 5 & 9), Wohlwollen (Items 2, 4 & 8) und Integrität (Items 3, 6 & 7). Die Skala beinhaltet modifizierte Items der Vertrauenswürdigkeitsskala von Mayer und Davis (1999). i = invers kodiert.

Ihre Einstellungen und Persönlichkeit

Die folgenden Aussagen beziehen sich auf persönliche Charaktermerkmale. Bitte beurteilen Sie wiederum, wie gut folgende Aussagen auf Sie zutreffen.

	Trifft ...					
	<i>überhaupt nicht zu</i>	<i>nicht zu</i>	<i>eher nicht zu</i>	<i>eher zu</i>	<i>zu</i>	<i>völlig zu</i>
¹ Ich bin zuversichtlich, dass ich im Leben den Erfolg habe, den ich auch verdiene.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² Manchmal fühle ich mich niedergeschlagen. (i)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ Wenn ich etwas probiere, bin ich generell erfolgreich.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ Wenn mir etwas misslingt, fühle ich mich manchmal wertlos. (i)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁵ Ich erfülle Aufgaben erfolgreich.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁶ Manchmal habe ich das Gefühl, dass ich meine Arbeit nicht im Griff habe. (i)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁷ Insgesamt bin ich mit mir selbst zufrieden.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁸ Ich zweifle an meinen Fähigkeiten. (i)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁹ Ich bestimme, was in meinem Leben passiert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹⁰ Ich habe keinen Einfluss auf meinen Karriereerfolg. (i)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹¹ Ich kann die meisten meiner Probleme bewältigen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹² Es gibt Zeiten, in denen mir alles ziemlich düster und hoffnungslos erscheint. (i)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Abbildung 2. Skala zu Messung der core self-evaluations (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003). i = invers kodiert.

Angaben zu Ihrer Person

Ihre Funktion:

- ☐ Kompaniekommandant
- ☐ Zugführer
- ☐ Kompaniefeldweibel
- ☐ Gruppenführer

Ihr Alter:

- ☐ bis 22 jährig
- ☐ 23-25 jährig
- ☐ 26-28 jährig
- ☐ 29-31 jährig

Ihr höchster Ausbildungsabschluss:

- ☐ Berufslehre
- ☐ Berufsmatura
- ☐ Matura
- ☐ Fachhochschule
- ☐ Universität
- ☐ Sonstiges: _____

Abbildung 3: Demographische Angaben.

Appendix C: Qualifikationsformular

SCHWEIZERISCHE ARMEE
ARMÉE SUISSE



ESERCITO SVIZZERO
ARMADA SVIZRA

Qualifikation für Kaderanwärter und Kader in Grundausbildungsdiensten und Fortbildungsdiensten der Truppe

Beurteilung durch den Vorgesetzten

GAD

Art des Dienstes:

- ☐ Zwischenqualifikation
☐ Schlussqualifikation

Anwärter/Prakt D als:

- ☐ Kpl
☐ Wm
☐ Fw
☐ Four
☐ Hptfw
☐ Adj Uof
☐ Stabsadj
☐ Hptadj
☐ Chefadj
☐ Lt
☐ Einh Kdt
☐ Kdt Trp Kö
☐ Fhr Geh Trp Kö
☐ Fhr Geh Gs Vb
☐ Gst Of
☐ HSO

FDT

Art des Dienstes:

Funktion als:

- ☐ Zwischenqualifikation
☐ Schlussqualifikation

Anwärter als:

- ☐ Kpl
☐ Wm
☐ Obwm
☐ Fw
☐ Four
☐ Hptfw
☐ Adj Uof
☐ Stabsadj
☐ Hptadj
☐ Chefadj
☐ Lt
☐ Einh Kdt
☐ Kdt Trp Kö
☐ Fhr Geh Trp Kö
☐ Fhr Geh Gs Vb
☐ Gst Of
☐ HSO

Abstufung der Beurteilung

5 hervorragend	übertrifft die Anforderungen in hohem Mass (von andern in gleicher Funktion kaum erreicht)
4 sehr gut	übertrifft die Anforderungen deutlich
3 gut	entspricht den Anforderungen
2 genügend	entspricht knapp den Anforderungen
1 ungenügend	entspricht den Anforderungen nicht

	Bemerkungen / Präzisierungen
A. Selbst- und Sozialkompetenz	
1. Persönliche Grundhaltung ...tritt als verlässliche, geradlinige Persönlichkeit auf. ...wird als loyaler Vorgesetzter, Kamerad und Unterstellter geschätzt. ...denkt und handelt selbständig und eigenverantwortlich. ...reagiert auf Kritik gelassen und lösungsorientiert. ...zeigt Initiative und Engagement, nimmt Rückschläge als Herausforderung wahr.	
	1-----2-----3-----4-----5
2. Soziales Verhalten ...pflegt in jeder Position einen geradlinigen, kollegialen Umgang.... ...begegnet anderen offen und verständnisvoll. ...verhält sich fürsorglich. ...nimmt Konfliktpotential wahr, geht Konflikte sachlich und lösungsorientiert an. ...kann sich in Gruppen gewinnbringend integrieren.	
	1-----2-----3-----4-----5
3. Geistige Fähigkeiten ... erfasst Lerninhalte rasch und vollständig. ... kann erworbene Kenntnisse in die Praxis umsetzen. ... entwickelt Lösungen. ... lernt aus begangenen Fehlern.	
	1-----2-----3-----4-----5

B. Handlungskompetenz	
1. Fähigkeit als Führer ...kann den Sinn seines Anliegens überzeugend vermitteln. ...wirkt durch eigenes Beispiel mitreissend. ...bleibt auch unter Belastung zuverlässig und konzentriert. ...qualifiziert Unterstellte seriös und fair.	 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
2. Kommunikationsverhalten ...drückt sich offen und direkt aus, hört anderen aktiv zu. ...gibt die Informationen regelmässig, zeit- und stufengerecht weiter. ...verfügt über eine natürliche Gestik und Mimik.	 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
3. Führungstechnik ...befiehlt das Wesentliche bestimmt, klar und situationsgerecht. ...setzt seine Unterchefs gezielt und sinnvoll ein. ...kontrolliert zweckmässig und in konstruktivem Klima.	 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
4. Fähigkeit als Ausbilder und Erzieher ...setzt angemessene Ziele und verfolgt sie konsequent. ...vermittelt die Ausbildungsinhalte verständlich, methodisch richtig und empfängerorientiert. ...sorgt für ideale Rahmenbedingungen. ...lebt die wesentlichen Werte vor und bemüht sich um Sinnvermittlung. ...nimmt Einfluss auf die Werthaltung der Unterstellten und fördert ihre Eigenverantwortung.	 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
C. Fachkompetenz	
1. Fachliche Leistungen ...hat ein ausreichendes militärisches Wissen. ...verfügt über solide Kenntnisse im spezifischen Fachbereich. ...kennt die relevanten Reglemente und kann ihren Inhalt in die Praxis umsetzen. ...ist bereit, sich im Fachbereich auf dem aktuellsten Stand zu halten.	 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

2. Ergebnisse von Inspektionen, Prüfungen; körperliche Leistungsfähigkeit - Schiessen - Theorietests - Praktische Tests - Sporttests	 1-----2-----3-----4-----5
D. Gesamtbeurteilung:	1-----2-----3-----4-----5
E. Förderhinweise (Zielsetzungen / Empfehlungen / Konkrete Massnahmen)	
F. Empfehlung für eine allfällige Weiterverwendung bzw. Vorschlag zur Weiterausbildung	

Der Qualifizierende: Datum und Unterschrift	Der Qualifizierte: Datum und Unterschrift	Der Genehmigende: Datum und Unterschrift
--	--	---

Beurteilung der Eignung für die Weiterausbildung zum		
Durch	Beurteilung	Datum/Unterschrift
	<input type="checkbox"/> geeignet <input type="checkbox"/> ungeeignet	
	<input type="checkbox"/> geeignet <input type="checkbox"/> ungeeignet	

Vorschlagserteilung zum		
Durch	Vorschlag erteilt	Datum/Unterschrift
	<input type="checkbox"/> ja <input type="checkbox"/> nein	

Genehmigung des Vorschlags		
Durch	Vorschlag genehmigt	Datum/Unterschrift
	<input type="checkbox"/> ja <input type="checkbox"/> nein	

Abbildung 4. Standardisiertes Qualifikationsformular der Schweizer Armee (Annen, 2000).

Appendix D: Fragebogen 2
(nach dem Qualifikationsgespräch auszufüllen)

Ihre Zufriedenheit mit der Beurteilung, dem Gespräch und dem System

Die folgenden Fragen beziehen sich auf Ihre Einstellung gegenüber der soeben erhaltenen Leistungsbeurteilung, dem Gespräch und dem Leistungsbeurteilungssystem. Bitte geben Sie an, in welchem Ausmass diese Aussagen auf Sie zutreffen.

	<i>Trifft ...</i>					
	<i>überhaupt nicht zu</i>	<i>nicht zu</i>	<i>eher nicht zu</i>	<i>eher zu</i>	<i>zu</i>	<i>völlig zu</i>
¹ Ich bin zufrieden mit der Beurteilung.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² Ich habe ein gutes Gefühl hinsichtlich der Beurteilung.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ Generell bin ich mit dem Gespräch zufrieden.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ Aus meiner Sicht war das Beurteilungsgespräch eine zufriedenstellende Erfahrung.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁵ Insgesamt bin ich zufrieden mit dem Leistungsbeurteilungssystem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁶ Ich denke, das Leistungsbeurteilungssystem ist fair.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Abbildung 5: Skala zur Messung der globalen Zufriedenheit nach dem Beurteilungsgespräch mit den Subdimensionen Beurteilungszufriedenheit (Items 1 & 2), Gesprächszufriedenheit (Items 3 & 4) und Systemzufriedenheit (Items 5 & 6).

Fragen zu den Rahmenbedingungen und Inhalten des Beurteilungsgesprächs

In den folgenden Aussagen geht es um die Rahmenbedingungen und Inhalte Ihres Beurteilungsgesprächs. Bitte geben Sie an, in welchem Ausmass diese Aussagen zutreffen.

	Trifft ...					
	<i>überhaupt nicht zu</i>	<i>nicht zu</i>	<i>eher nicht zu</i>	<i>eher zu</i>	<i>zu</i>	<i>völlig zu</i>
¹ Ich habe Vorschläge gemacht, wie meine Aufgaben anders erledigt werden können.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² Ich habe meine wichtigsten Verantwortungsbereiche zur Sprache bringen können.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ Wir haben darüber gesprochen, was ich als meine Stärken und Schwächen sehe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ Ich habe mit meinem Vorgesetzten über die Bereiche gesprochen, in denen ich Probleme mit den Arbeitsaufgaben habe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁵ Ich habe meine Sicht der Dinge darstellen können.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁶ Ich habe meinem Vorgesetzten geschildert, welche Dinge meiner Meinung nach bei meiner Tätigkeit am wichtigsten sind.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁷ Ich habe meinem Vorgesetzten erzählt, wie ich mich selber bewerten würde.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁸ Ich habe das Mitarbeitergespräch dazu nutzen können, meine Ideen und Gefühle meinem Vorgesetzten mitzuteilen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Abbildung 6. Skala zur Messung der Nicht-Instrumentellen Meinungsäusserung (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995).

Fragen zu den Rahmenbedingungen und Inhalten des Beurteilungsgesprächs

In den folgenden Aussagen geht es um die Rahmenbedingungen und Inhalte Ihres Beurteilungsgesprächs. Bitte geben Sie an, in welchem Ausmass diese Aussagen zutreffen.

	<i>Trifft ...</i>					
	<i>überhaupt nicht zu</i>	<i>nicht zu</i>	<i>eher nicht zu</i>	<i>eher zu</i>	<i>zu</i>	<i>völlig zu</i>
⁹ Ich hatte die Möglichkeit, neue Themen in das Gespräch einzubringen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹⁰ Mein Vorgesetzter und ich tragen gleichermaßen die Verantwortung dafür, wie das Gespräch verlief.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹¹ Ich habe Einfluss darauf gehabt, wie mein Vorgesetzter meine Arbeit bewertet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹² Ich konnte den Gesprächsverlauf nicht beeinflussen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
¹³ Ich konnte Einfluss auf die Diskussion nehmen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Abbildung 6. Skala zur Messung der Instrumentellen Meinungsäusserung (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995).

Weitere Fragen zu den Rahmenbedingungen und Inhalten des Beurteilungsgesprächs.

Die Beurteilung basierte auf:	Trifft ...					
	überhaupt nicht zu	nicht zu	eher nicht zu	eher zu	zu	völlig zu
¹ • geleisteten Arbeitsergebnissen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² • aufgabenbezogenem Verhalten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ • meinen Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ • vorgegebenen Zielen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Abbildung 8. Skala zur Messung der Beurteilungsakkuratheit (Nathan, Mohrman, & Milliman, 1991).

Weitere Fragen zu den Rahmenbedingungen und Inhalten des Beurteilungsgesprächs.

Nachfolgend finden Sie noch ein paar Fragen zur Qualität der Ziele, welche Sie zusammen mit Ihrem Vorgesetzten festgelegt haben.

	<i>überhaupt nicht zu</i>	<i>nicht zu</i>	<i>Trifft ... eher nicht zu</i>	<i>eher zu</i>	<i>zu</i>	<i>völlig zu</i>
¹ Mein Vorgesetzter und ich haben im Gespräch spezifische Ziele festgelegt, die ich bei meiner Arbeit erreichen soll.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
² Die Ziele, die mein Vorgesetzter und ich festgelegt haben, sind herausfordernd.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
³ Ich weiss, welche der im Beurteilungsgespräch festgelegten Ziele am wichtigsten und welche weniger wichtig sind.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁴ Im Qualifikationsgespräch haben wir klar formulierte Ziele vereinbart.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Abbildung 9. Skala zur Messung der Zielqualität (3 Items der Zielqualitätsskala von Alberternst, 2003).

Weitere Fragen zu den Rahmenbedingungen und Inhalten des Beurteilungsgesprächs.

Nachfolgend finden Sie noch ein paar Fragen zur Qualität der Ziele, welche Sie zusammen mit Ihrem Vorgesetzten festgelegt haben.

	<i>Trifft ...</i>					
	<i>überhaupt nicht zu</i>	<i>nicht zu</i>	<i>eher nicht zu</i>	<i>eher zu</i>	<i>zu</i>	<i>völlig zu</i>
⁵ Ich stehe voll hinter den festgelegten Zielen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
⁶ Ich strenge mich an, diese Ziele zu erreichen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Abbildung 10. Skala zur Messung des Zielcommitments (Alberternst, 2003).